



RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY BITOU MUNICIPALITY

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FOREWORD

The importance of good and efficient record keeping should be recognised because information is vital to activities that contribute to service delivery, such as, decision-making, planning, problem-solving, innovation, good governance and accountability.

Records are created or received by organisations as they conduct their business. These records contain information and evidence of organizational activities. Public records are key to accountability and good governance because they reflect the government's functions, activities, procedures and the administrative processes that generate them, as well as the facts, acts, and transactions affiliated to them. In a nutshell, records enable governmental bodies to function. Records prove what you did, why you did it and the results of that action. To be useful however, records must be managed effectively.

The focus of records management is on the creation, evaluation, storage, access, retrieval, dissemination, use and disposition of records in any form or media. Records Management is therefore not media specific or limited by time and space. The Bitou Municipality which integrates with business processes and society; upholds the continuous use of records; and addresses management of both paper and electronic records.

Records management is, however, the responsibility of every public official involved in one or more aspects of records management.

This policy seeks therefore, to provide a high-level direction to all employees for managing records of the Bitou Municipality in terms of the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005), and will hopefully draw attention to the importance of records and enhance sound records management practices in the Bitou Municipality.

Mr. M. Memani
Municipal Manager

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Abbreviations

BM: Bitou Municipality

Definitions

Archives repository:

The building in which records with archival value are preserved permanently, the Western Cape Archives and Records Service, 72 Roeland Street, Cape Town.

Authentic records:

Authentic records are records that can be proven to be what they purport to be. They are also records that are considered by the creators to be their official record.

Authoritative records:

Authoritative records are records that are authentic, reliable, trustworthy and useable and are complete and unaltered.

Correspondence system:

A set of paper-based and electronic communications and associated documents, sent, received, generated, processed and stored during the conduct of business.

Custody:

The control of records based upon their physical possession.

Disposal:

The action of either destroying/deleting a record or transferring it into archival custody.

Disposal authority:

A written authority issued by the Western Cape Archives and Records Service specifying which records should be transferred into archival custody or specifying which records should be destroyed/deleted or otherwise disposed of.

Disposal authority number:

A unique number identifying each disposal authority issued to a specific office.

Electronic records:

Information which is generated electronically and stored by means of computer technology. Electronic records can consist of an electronic correspondence system and electronic record systems other than the correspondence system.

Electronic records system:

This is the collective noun for all components of an electronic information system, namely: electronic media as well as all connected items such as source documents, output information,

software applications, programs and metadata (background and technical information in respect of the information stored electronically) and in hard copy. All these components are defined as records by the Act. They must therefore be dealt with in accordance with the Act's provisions.

File plan:

A pre-determined classification plan by which records are filed and/or electronically indexed to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records.

Filing system:

The collective noun for a storage system (like files, boxes, shelves or electronic applications and storage systems) in which records are stored in a systematic manner according to a file plan.

Non-archival records:

Records with a short lived interest or usefulness.

Public record:

A record created or received by a governmental body in pursuance of its activities, regardless of form or medium.

Records other than correspondence systems:

Records that do not form part of a correspondence file, or a case file e.g. registers, maps, plans, electronic records, audio-visual records, etc.

Record:

- 1) Recorded information regardless of form or medium.
- 2) Evidence of a transaction, preserved for the evidential information it contains.

Records classification system:

A plan for the systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules represented in the classification system.

Recording:

Anything on which sounds or images or both are fixed or from which sounds or images or both are capable of being reproduced, regardless of form.

Record keeping:

Making and maintaining complete, accurate and reliable evidence of official business in the form of recorded information.

Records management

Records management is a process of ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records throughout their life cycle to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable

governance.

Retention period:

The length of time that records should be retained in offices before they are either transferred into archival custody or destroyed/deleted.

Schedule for records other than correspondence systems:

A control mechanism for records other than correspondence files (other records), which contains a description and the disposal instructions and retention periods of all other records. It consists of the following parts:

- 1 Schedule for paper-based records other than correspondence files;
- 2 Schedule for electronic records systems other than the electronic correspondence system;
- 3 Schedule for microfilm records, and Schedule for audio-visual records.

1. Policy statement

1.1. Creation or receipt of records

- 1.1.1 Records creation and receipt is the responsibility of all staff, hence records management in the Bitou Municipality shall be integrated with the activities that promote the core mission and vision of the organization.
- 1.1.2 Records are created internally or received from external sources and bear evidence of internal and external activities of an organization. This evidential quality of records distinguishes them from any other type of information resource which may be produced and retained solely for reference purposes.
- 1.1.3 Records creation can occur in many ways using a variety of devices, such as personal computers, laptops and hand-held devices.
- 1.1.4 Records are important resources for planning, decision-making, accountability, good governance, research and to support service delivery. Creators of records must bear this in mind when records are created.
- 1.1.5 Records created must be usable, accurate, authentic, have integrity, and be reliable and since their evidentiary value may be at risk of not being accepted. In order for a record to be authentic, reliable; have evidential weight and legal admissibility;
 - 1.1.5.1 the record must bear all of the following:

- the logo and address of the creating organisation;
- record creation date;
- file reference number (from file plan approved by Western Cape Archives and Records Service);
- author/s of the record;
- addressee;
- signature of the author or delegate. In the case of electronic records, Sections 13(4) and 28(2) of the Electronic Communications and Transaction Act, 2002 (Act 25, 2002) apply;

- indication of attachments and or links to other records, and
- subject matter.

- 1.1.6 The record must be whole and unaltered or unformatted. If for example, someone alters the minutes of a meeting after they have been approved, the minutes can no longer be considered an accurate record of the meeting. Complete and accurate records lead to efficiency and effectiveness; ensure straightforward audits and reduced legal risks.
- 1.1.7 Records are created as evidence of decisions, actions and transactions. It therefore must be created at the time of the transaction or incident to which they relate, or soon afterwards, such as documenting the minutes of a meeting from recordings made during the meeting. Reliability will be apparent if there is evidence that the records were created and captured as part of a legitimate business process. The operational context or business process within which a record has been generated or managed should also be visible.
- 1.1.8 Processes associated with individual records such as version control must be documented to reduce the risk of working from or updating the wrong version of a document or sending out the wrong version.
- 1.1.9 An electronic records management system used to create; provide access to and manage records (including hardware, software and network infrastructure) must:
- 1.1.9.1 Be reliable, that is, be capable of continuous operation. Documentation to prove reliability must be kept and provided when needed;
- 1.1.9.2 Have security measures in place to protect records from unauthorized access, alteration or disposal;
- 1.1.9.3 Be capable of implementing all records management processes according to the Records Management Continuum Model;
- 1.1.9.4 Be capable of retaining the authenticity, reliability and integrity of records should there be a system change; migration or discontinuation;
- 1.1.9.5 Be approved by WCARS as stipulated in the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005, (3 of 2005), and
- 1.1.9.6 Collaborator is the approved electronic records management System for use in the Bitou Municipality.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The Bitou Municipality is a governmental body and as such create and receive public records. The records form the administrative foundation and the corporate memory of the organization. This policy defines the legislative and governing framework, roles and responsibilities, as well as departmental perimeters for the implementation of the policy.
- 2.2 The policy applies to all records irrespective of form or medium, and by implication includes both physical and electronic records.
- 2.3 The purpose of this policy is to act as a guideline and manual to manage all records in a well-structured record keeping system in the Bitou Municipality , in order to:

- 2.4 Support and document policy formation and administrative decision-making;
- 2.5 Support the business, legal and accountability requirements of the Bitou Municipality
- 2.6 Support and document Bitou Municipality activities, development and achievements.
- 2.7 Records management, through the proper control of the content, storage and volume of records, reduces vulnerability to legal challenge or financial loss and promotes best value in terms of human and space resources through greater co-ordination of information and storage systems.

3. Legislative framework

- 3.1 By managing its records effectively and efficiently the Bitou Municipality strives to give effect to the accountability, transparency and service delivery values contained in the legal framework established by:
 - 3.1.1 Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005);
 - 3.1.2 Regulations in terms of the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape, 2005;
 - 3.1.3 Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999);
 - 3.1.4 Municipal Finance Management Act (Act 56 of 2003);
 - 3.1.5 Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000);
 - 3.1.6 Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act 3 of 2000);
 - 3.1.7 Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2002 (Act 25 of 2002);
 - 3.1.8 Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013);
 - 3.1.9 Copyright Act, 98 of 1978 and related amendments;
 - 3.1.10 The Treasury Regulations;
 - 3.1.11 The Public Service Act, 1994 (Act 103 of 1994);
 - 3.1.12 The Public Service Regulations, 2001;
 - 3.1.13 The e-Government Framework and the National e-Strategy;
 - 3.1.14 ISO 17799 Information Security Framework, for Public Service;
 - 3.1.15 ISO 17799: Position paper on Security Information;
 - 3.1.16 Minimum Information Security Standards , 1996;
 - 3.1.17 The e-Government Strategy and Roadmap, 2017;
 - 3.1.18 Records Management Policy of Western Cape Governmental Bodies, 2017 (as amended);

3.1.19 Western Cape Government Enterprise Content Management (ECM) Governance Policy Framework, 2019.

4. Scope of application and intended audience

4.1 The policy applies to all staff members of the Bitou Municipality and covers all records regardless of format, medium or age.

4.2 External role-players to the Bitou Municipality, who by the nature of their business, access information of the Bitou Municipality, are bound by this policy.

4.3 The policy will be implemented by the Bitou Municipality. The Municipal Manager supports the implementation of this policy and requires each staff member to support the values underlying in this policy.

4.4 This policy impacts upon the work practices for all staff with regard to:

4.4.1 Creation of records, including electronic records;

4.4.2 Have access to records;

4.4.3 Have any other responsibilities for records, storage and maintenance responsibilities;

4.4.4 Have management responsibility for staff engaged in any of these activities; or

4.4.5 Manage or have design input into the information technology infrastructure.

4.5 All records shall be kept in storage areas that are appropriate for the type of medium. Guidelines shall be contained in the Records Management Procedure Manual of the Bitou Municipality.

5. Guiding model

5.1 This policy upholds the Records Continuum Model as it has been realized that records can be used continuously if they are considered to be of value at the time they are created. Recordkeeping activities take place from before the records are created by identifying recordkeeping requirements in policies, systems, organizations, processes, laws and social mandates that impact on what is created and how it is managed over space and time.

5.2 In addition, the continuum model highlights the importance of records and archives management for both managerial and cultural responsibilities. Adoption of this records management model is aimed at integrating and institutionalizing records and archives management with business processes in the Bitou Municipality.

5.3 According to the Records Continuum Model, there are four stages of records management, namely,

5.3.1 Creation or receipt (business activities which generate records as evidence of business transactions);

5.3.2 Classification (ensuring that the record is given the necessary elements such as file numbers and metadata so that it will be available over time);

5.3.3 Establishment of retention/disposal schedules and their subsequent implementation;

5.3.4 Maintenance and use (in the creators and other stakeholders).

6. Records Classification

6.1 File plan

- 6.1.1 The file plan shall be used for the classification of paper-based and electronic (including e-mail) records. The file plan will be managed and maintained to reflect the functions of the business.
- 6.1.2 The List of Series of Separate Case Files forms part of the correspondence system and shall be managed as such.
- 6.1.3 When correspondence is created/received for which no subject exists in the file plan, the Manager: Administration should be contacted to assist with additions to the file plan. Under no circumstances may subjects be added to the file plan if it has not been approved by the Manager: Administration.

6.2 Records other than correspondence systems

6.2.1 Records Control Schedule

- 6.2.1.1 A schedule of all records other than the correspondence systems, refer to as a Records Control Schedule, shall be maintained by the Manager: Administration.
- 6.2.1.2 The schedule shall consist of two (2) parts namely:
 - 6.2.1.2.1 Part 1: Schedule of paper-based records other than correspondence records.
 - 6.2.1.2.2 Part 2: Schedule for electronic records systems other than correspondence systems.
- 6.2.1.3 The Records Control Schedule shall contain a description of each set of records other than the correspondence system and indicates the storage location of these records and retention periods of these records regardless of its format.
- 6.2.1.4 Should records be created/received that are not listed in the Schedule, the Manager: Administration must be contacted to assist with requests for additions to the schedule.

7. Records Management Policy Documents

7.1 Records Management Policy

- 7.1.1 At the centre of the records management program are the records management policies. These policies define what information the municipality must keep as a record, the procedures for managing those records, their retention periods, and procedures for ensuring their secure destruction.

7.2 Registry Procedure Manual

- 7.2.1 The Registry Procedure Manual documents all processes involved in the management of records, defines roles and responsibilities and provides information to business regarding available services by Records Management and Registry component, to business as their client. The Manual provides a step-by-step guideline for training of new staff in the Bitou

Municipality. The Manual must be updated on a regular basis to ensure alignment to actual processes.

7.3 **Compliance with Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)**

7.3.1 All personal information provided to Bitou Municipality will not be distributed to third parties and will be used for this office's benefit. All personal information will be filed and stored securely in a filing cabinet that always remains locked and is only accessible by the designated officials of Bitou Municipality as prescribed and in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act.

7.3.2 In all instances where information is to be perused by any official or requests for information is submitted, it shall be considered in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act.

7.3.3 Once this information is no longer required, it will be destroyed according to our Retention Schedules.

7.4 **Disposal authorities**

For disposal authorities issued on records of the Bitou Municipality, see Annexure A.

7.4.1 All disposal actions on official records will be managed in terms of Standing and Limited disposal authorities, in a structured and documented disposal programme.

7.4.2 The legal obligations and functional requirements of the Western Cape Archives and Records Service are taken into consideration in determining retention periods.

7.4.3 No public records (including emails) shall be destroyed, erased or otherwise disposed without permission from the Manager: Administration and prior written authorisation from the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

7.4.4 All disposal actions should be authorised by the Manager: Administration prior to their execution to ensure that archival records are not destroyed inadvertently.

7.4.5 Non-Archival records that are needed for litigation, Promotion of Administrative Justice actions, etc. may not be destroyed until Legal Services indicated that the destruction hold can be lifted.

7.4.6 Paper-based archival records shall be kept safely until it is due for transfer to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

7.4.7 **Team to develop retention periods:** The Director Corporate Services, as delegated by the Municipal Manager shall nominate such team comprising the Manager: Administration (Chairperson) and one senior staff member from each of the different directorates of Bitou Municipality.

7.4.8 Retention schedules shall be reviewed at least once a year or when the need arises to effect changes which affect management of records.

7.4.9 **Transfer procedures** shall be as prescribed by the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

7.4.10 Records shall first be assessed to determine the retention period by the Municipal Manager and retention committee. Once records for transferring (A20s) are identified it is listed on the list of files to be transferred. This list of files is then sent to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

7.4.11 Upon approval received from the Western Cape Archives and Records Services the documents are then prepared and labelled for transfer. All documents to be transferred will be done under the authority received from the Western Cape Archives and Records Services.

7.5 Storage Areas

7.5.1 Paper-based correspondence files are kept in the custody of-

7.5.1.1 The Registry Storage Areas

7.5.1.1.1 The Central Registry is a secure storage area and only registry staff are allowed in the area.

7.5.1.1.2 Staff members that need access to files in the registry must request it from the registry staff.

7.5.1.1.3 The registry shall be locked when it is not in operation.

7.5.1.2 Strong room

7.5.1.3 Various storage areas as indicated in the Records Control Schedule

All these records are under the management of the Manager: Administration who is mandated to ensure that it is managed properly.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 Municipal Manager

8.1.1 The Municipal Manager is the Head of the institution, Bitou Municipality.

8.1.2 Is ultimately accountable for the record and records management practices of Bitou Municipality.

8.1.3 Is committed to enhance accountability, transparency and improvement of service delivery by ensuring that sound records management practices are implemented and maintained.

8.1.4 Supports the implementation of this policy and requires each staff member to support the values underlying in this policy.

8.1.5 Shall designate a manager to be the Manager: Administration of Bitou Municipality and shall mandate the Manager: Administration to perform such duties as are necessary to enhance the record keeping and records management practices of Bitou Municipality to enable compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

8.1.6 Shall nominate a team with decision-making powers and business professional knowledge to develop retention periods for the body.

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8.2 **Directors/Senior Managers**

- 8.2.1 Shall ensure that all staff is made aware of their record keeping and records management responsibilities and obligations.
- 8.2.2 Are responsible for:
 - 8.2.2.1 Implementation of this policy in their respective units;
 - 8.2.2.2 Lead by example and shall themselves maintain good record keeping and records management practices, and
 - 8.2.2.3 Ensure that the management of records including e-mail is a key responsibility in the performance agreements of all the staff in their units.

8.3 **Manager: Administration**

- 8.3.1 The Manager: Administration is overall responsible for:
 - 8.3.1.1 The implementation of this policy;
 - 8.3.1.2 Staff awareness regarding this policy;
 - 8.3.1.3 The management of all records according to the records management principles contained in the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005), and
 - 8.3.1.4 The determination of retention periods in consultation with the users by taking into account the functional, legal and historical need of the Department to maintain its records of transactions.
 - 8.3.1.5 The Manager: Administration is mandated to offer training and other interventions as are necessary to ensure that the Bitou Municipality record keeping and records management practices comply with the records management principles contained in the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005).
 - 8.3.1.6 The Manager: Administration may from time-to-time issue circulars and instructions regarding the record keeping and records management practices of the Bitou Municipality.
 - 8.3.1.7 The Manager: Administration shall ensure that all records created and received by the Bitou Municipality are classified according to an approved file plan and Records Control Schedule and that a written disposal authority is obtained from the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.
 - 8.3.1.8 The Manager: Administration may delegate operational responsibilities to the Registry Clerk; however, it is the Manager: Administration's responsibility to ensure that the Bitou Municipality records management practices comply with the requirements of the Act.
 - 8.3.1.9 The Manager: Administration must put measures in place to mitigate any disaster that may damage or harm the records and information of the Bitou Municipality.

8.4 **Chief Information Officer**

8.4.1 The Chief Information Officer is responsible for approval of requests for information in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act. The Municipal Manager is designated as the Chief Information Officer,

8.4.2 The Chief Information Officer shall inform the Manager: Administration if a request for information necessitates a disposal hold to be placed on records that are due for disposal.

8.5 **Registry Staff**

8.5.1 The Registry staff are overall responsible for:

8.5.1.1 The day-to-day physical management of the records in the registry.

8.5.1.2 Detailed responsibilities regarding the day-to-day management of records in the registry are contained in the Registry Procedure Manual

8.6 **Staff**

8.6.1 Every staff member shall create records of transactions while conducting official business.

8.6.2 Every staff member shall manage those records efficiently and Effectively by;

8.6.2.1 Allocating reference numbers and subjects to paper-based and electronic records according to the file plan.

8.6.2.2 Sending paper-based records to the respective registry for filing.

8.6.3 Records management responsibilities must be written into the performance agreements of all staff members to ensure that staff are evaluated on their records management responsibilities.

9. **Access and security**

9.1 No staff member shall disclose information or records which are not in the public domain to the public without consulting the Municipal Manager of the Bitou Municipality.

9.2 This includes personal information of any member of staff or client of Bitou Municipality.

9.3 No staff member shall remove records from the premises of the Bitou Municipality without the permission of the Manager: Administration.

9.4 Records and records storage areas shall at all times be protected against unauthorized access, and

9.5 All electronic records shall be protected by means of strict permission-based and auditable user administration.

10. **Records disaster mitigation and recovery program (includes business continuity, protection of vital records)**

10.1 Vital records are emphasized because of their legal, financial or administrative value in case of an emergency. Vital records must be protected from natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods or fire, manmade disasters such as accidents, civil disorder, vandalism

or sabotage. They also need protection from common threats of mildew, light, dust, insects, rodents, and excessive humidity, which may cause a loss of legibility, etc.

11. Legality Admissibility and Evidential Weight

11.1 The records of the Bitou Municipality shall at all times contain reliable evidence of business operations. The following shall apply:

11.1.1 Paper-based Records

11.1.1.1 No records shall be removed from paper-based files without the explicit permission of the Manager: Administration in writing.

11.1.1.2 Records that were placed on files shall not be altered in any way.

11.1.1.3 No alterations of any kind shall be made to records other than correspondence files without the explicit permission of the Manager: Administration.

11.1.2 Electronic Records

11.1.2.1 The Bitou Municipality shall use systems which ensure that its electronic records are:

- Authentic;
- Not altered or tampered with;
- Auditable, and
- Produced in systems which utilize security measures to ensure their integrity.

11.2 Handling of Emails

11.2.1 All staff must manage their emails appropriately. Official emails must be classified according to classification systems and filed accordingly.

12. Records Management Inspections

12.1 External

12.1.1 This function is provided by the Records Management Section of the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.

12.2 Internal

12.2.1 This function is the responsibility of the Manager: Administration to conduct quarterly inspections at staff's offices and internal records storage areas.

13. Training

13.1 The Manager: Administration will facilitate awareness, education and training with regards to records management prescripts and procedures within the Bitou Municipality.

14 Disciplinary Processes and Procedures

14.1 Deliberate tampering with records, willful damage and illegal disposal/destruction of public records is a criminal offence and may lead to criminal proceedings.

14.2 Transgression of this policy constitutes misconduct and where necessary, disciplinary procedures will be taken.

15 Monitor and review

15.1 The Manager: Administration shall review the record keeping and records management practices of the Bitou Municipality on a regular basis and shall adapt them appropriately to ensure that they meet the business and service delivery requirements of the office. All relevant documents, including this policy, shall be updated regularly, but at least once a year to ensure that it reflects current practices at all times.

16 Adoption and Implementation

The implementation date of this Policy is with effect from the date of the Municipal Council's approval.

The policy must be adopted by all staff throughout the Bitou Municipality.

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Annexure A

Disposal authorities issued on records of the Bitou Municipality:

Current file plan

CURRENT FILE PLAN	DISPOSAL AUTHORITY ISSUING DATE
DISPOSAL AUTHORITY NUMBER : PSB24KW	04 September 2019
PSB24KW: Current approved file plan, 04 September 2019	Disposal authority number PSB24 was issued on 04 September 2019

Records Control Schedule

RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE	DISPOSAL AUTHORITY ISSUING DATES
DISPOSAL AUTHORITY NUMBER	
PSB14KW Records Control Schedule: Bitou Municipality	Disposal authority number PSB14KW was issued by the WCARS on 25 March 2009

Terminated correspondence files

TERMINATED FILE PLAN	DISPOSAL AUTHORITY ISSUING DATES
DISPOSAL AUTHORITY NUMBER (S)	
Disposal Authority Number : PBB8KW-Terminated Correspondence, 1936-2005; Bitou Municipality	PBB8KW was issued by the Western Cape Archives and Record Service on 24 June 2009