"You Said; We Did" - Action List – August 2017

Actions from June 2017 Barbican Residential Committee (BRC) & other outstanding issues (updates appear in italics)

Issue	Source	Officer	Action Escalation
City's website			
A resolution be sent to the next Information Technology Sub (Finance) (ITS) Committee expressing Members' continuous difficulty in using the City's website. *Minute from ITS on 26 May and a reference to the Website Stand alone Policy - from Culture, Heritage & Libraries (CHL) Committee on 10 July.* *MINUTE FROM ITS ON 26 MAY* *Members considered a resolution from the BRC dated 13 February 2017. The resolution noted that Members of the BRC felt that the search engine on the City of London Corporation website was not fit for purpose. The following points were made.* • *The IT Director noted that he had discussed this issue with the Director of Communications, who was responsible for the team that managed the City of London Corporation's website and intranet. Consultants had been appointed to advise on improving user experience of the website and would report in June 2017. Following this, a report would be submitted to Members that would outline proposed improvements to the website.* • *Members queried the split in responsibility for website system infrastructure and website maintenance between the IT Director and the Director of Communications, and expressed concern that this illustrated a disjoint in oversight. In response the Chamberlain agreed*	Feb 17 BRC	Town Clerks	

to bring a paper to the Sub Committee outlining service responsibilities and business requirements for the City of London Corporation website and intranet. *MINUTE FROM CHL ON 10 JULY* *The Committee received a report of the Director of Communications in respect of the Standalone Website Policy, which had been approved by the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub Committee on 8th June. The Chairman of the ITS Committee was present and asked that before any new web sites were implemented that officers should check with the IT division, to ensure there would be no systems issues.* • *RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.*			
Concrete testing and repairs			
Members were disappointed that the concrete reports from the early 1990's were unavailable and some Members recalled having sight of them at an earlier meeting. Officers advised that the later reports had superseded them but would endeavour to trace them. Members asked for officers to ensure that, going forward, all investigative reports were archived and asked to see the current archiving policy.	Feb 17 BRC	Mike Saunders	Copy of archiving and storage guidelines attached

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Storing and Managing Electronic Records

These guidelines have been created to support departmental officers who are responsible for electronic documents and records. London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) has created this guidance based on best practice advice from The National Archives and the Digital Preservation Coalition.

The main challenge presented by electronic documents (our Word, Excel, PDF files etc.) is long term preservation. At LMA we have City of London documents written on paper and parchment which are nearly 1000 years old. We can say that the long term preservation of the information they contain has been managed successfully so far!

1. Recommended Storage Media for Long Term Preservation

Server based hard disk storage is the most effective and secure storage regime for electronic records provided it is well managed and supported by an effective back-up routine.

The second best option is an external hard drive with a second copy on a second (mirror) hard drive stored elsewhere as a backup – this is absolutely essential if you have to use an external drive.

The use of CD's, DVD's, USB and pen drives for long term storage of any data is not recommended. Where the use of removable media (CD, DVD, Tape etc.) is unavoidable, gold coated CD-R and DVD-R's should be used and stored in a cool, dry, secure environment. Where a larger data solution is required, LTO Ultrium tapes should be used and again, stored in a cool, dry, secure environment. Memory sticks or solid state storage devices (such as SmartMedia cards) should not be used for long term data storage.

In the unlikely event that these suggestions do not adequately meet your requirements, the following criteria for selecting removable media should be considered:

- Longevity – the media should have a proven lifespan of at least 10 years. Longer is not necessarily useful as drive technology obsolescence usually predates the end of the active life of a format (e.g. Betamax video – most tapes are still playable, **if** you can find a player)
- Capacity – The capacity needs to be enough to cope with the file formats you are storing. A DVD can store the same volume of data as dozens of CD's.

- Viability – Media and drives should provide error detection facilities, provision for testing the integrity of data after writing a file is also useful and data recovery techniques should be available. Media should be 'write once' or have a reliable write protect mechanism to prevent accidental overwriting.

- Obsolescence – Media and drives should be mature products in the market and widely available. Technology based on open standards should generally be preferred to those proprietary to a single manufacturer if the manufacturer is small and with without widespread use.

- Cost – Cost comparisons for media should always be made on a price per MB/GB/TB basis. Total cost of ownership should include the cost of hardware required to use the media.

- Susceptibility – The media should be robust and difficult to physically damage. It should be tolerant to a wide range of environmental conditions without data loss.

2. Care and Handling of Storage Media

Storage

In the recommendations below, 'media' refers to external hard drives, LTO style tapes and CD/DVD's.

- Media storage areas must be cool, dry, stable and secure.

- Media should always be stored in correct cases. The containers of many magnetic tape formats are designed to minimise risk from magnetic fields and should therefore always be used. Archival quality cases made from inert polyester are recommended where available. Rigid jewel cases should always be used for optical disks as they provide greater protection.

- Media should not be left in a drive when not in use as this causes unnecessary heat and mechanical damage.

- Do not allow media to come into contact with liquids, dust or smoke, and keep it away from direct heat and sunlight.

- All media should be stored in an appropriate position (vertically for tapes) and kept within storage areas which are secure and fire resistant.

- Store magnetic media away from strong magnetic fields.

- Storage and access areas must be free of dust, smoke, dirt and other contaminants.

Handling and Use

- Drives used to access digital archive media must be high quality devices. All media access devices must be clean and well maintained.
- Transport magnetic tape media in packaging with enclosures with space clearances of 50 mm.
- Where media is stored in a controlled cold environment, it should be allowed to acclimatise for 24 hours before use.
- Do not place labels on CD/DVD's and avoid writing on them using a pen or pencil. The case should be used for identification and the CD/DVD must therefore not be detached from the casing. Follow manufacturers' recommendations for labelling. If you are worried about the disc becoming separated from the case, make sure that your storage processes do not allow this to happen!
- Always check your files after writing them to a CD/DVD or external drive. It's essential that you check that the copy you have made is usable and exactly the same as the source.

3. Specifying File Formats to Support Long Term Preservation

A file format encodes information into a form which can only be read or made accessible for processing by specific combinations of hardware and software. In a market where technology is constantly changing, this leaves our data in a very vulnerable position. The Microsoft Office formats are generally preferable as they are easy to access through our desktop software.

If you have the opportunity to specify file formats for office use within your area, consider the following criteria:

- Ensure that formats you want to use are already supported by the City of London IS Division. If not, make sure that you discuss your requirement with the IS Division as soon as possible.
- Widespread Use – use popular formats which are in widespread use and are likely to have longer periods of support from manufacturers.
- Stability – formats should not be subject to regular major changes over time. New versions of the software should be backwards compatible.
- Metadata Support – There should preferably be automatic or manual recording of metadata.

- Interoperability – The ability to be able to open a file format within a number of different software systems is very desirable. This supports long term sustainability and migration.

- Error Detection – Some formats, such as .PNG, include byte sequences which check error types within the data. Such formats are more robust than those without error detection and are therefore desirable.

- Authenticity – The format must preserve the content (data and structure) or the record and any inherent contextual, provenance, referencing or fixing information.

Common Formats in City of London Archive at LMA

MS Word Document
MS Excel Document
PDF
JPEG
TIFF
MPEG4
MP3
MOV