DISPOSITION OF RECORDS WITH THE NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND

Executive summary

1. The purpose of this paper is to inform Leadership Group of activities that will take place over 2017 and 2018 in preparation for the permanent transfer of Session 1 historical records to the National Records of Scotland (NRS) in 2018. This will be the first large-scale transfer of records and will be followed by regular deposits in accordance with the SPCB records retention schedule.

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Issues and Options

2. The archives of the Scottish Parliament (including the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and the Scottish Commission for Public Audit) must preserve and make available to the public records of enduring historical, cultural and research value.

3. A Memorandum of understanding with the NRS (formerly the National Archives of Scotland) has been in place since it was signed off by SMT in 2004 (SMT 080 (2004)). The memorandum was last updated in 2014 and sets out the understanding between the Keeper of the Records of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament on how the process of depositing, storing and accessing records which have been transferred from the Scottish Parliament to the NRS operates.

4. The purpose of the NRS is to collect, preserve and produce information about Scotland’s people and history and make it available to inform current and future generations. Scottish Parliament records are archived alongside records of Scotland from other public bodies and private depositors.

5. Records are deposited in the NRS in accordance with section 5 of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 1937 and in fulfilment of the Scottish Parliament’s records management obligations under the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011.

6. Historical records of the Scottish Parliament are transferred to the NRS for permanent preservation where they can be made available to the public. Records become historical 15 years after creation. Having consulted the Solicitor’s Office, we have been advised that most Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) exemptions cannot be used to exempt historical information.

7. The NRS was involved in the development of the SPCB records retention schedule and contributed to the identification of records series of historical value. The SPCB records retention schedule was signed off by Group Heads and the Solicitor’s Office.
Resource Implications

8. Activities concerning the archiving of records are business-as-usual for the Information Management and Governance (IMG) team and there is currently no requirement for additional resource.

9. Should business areas need to be involved in reviewing activities, they will be informed at the earliest opportunity.

Dependencies

10. The success of the first transfer depends on the active involvement of the NRS and the establishment of a process for transferring both hardcopy and digital records. The transfer of born digital historical records, which account for approximately 80% of all Session 1 records, is dependent on the NRS being in a position to archive them. The NRS has tentatively committed to being in a position to archive our historical records by the end of 2018. The capability to provide full public access to our born digital historical records should be in place by 2021.

11. Preparation of historical records prior to transfer may depend on participation from some offices. Offices will be alerted to any activities at the earliest opportunity.

Governance issues

12. The Information Manager will continue to manage the transfer of historical records to the NRS as a business-as-usual activity.

Publication Scheme

13. This paper may be published in line with the SPCB’s publication scheme.

Next steps

14. IMG team to liaise with the NRS to prepare a plan for the review and disposition of Session 1 records in 2018.

15. IMG to review records due for transfer and liaise with relevant business areas to prepare for transfer to the NRS.

Decision

16. LG is invited to note the first significant execution of the business as usual activity of depositing records with the NRS by the end of summer recess 2018, prior to the formal publication of archived records on 01 January 2019.