



STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CENTRALISATION OF RECORDS

Approved on 1 December 2018

Table of Contents	Page
PREFACE	3
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	6
1. INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 Statutory framework	9
1.2 Benchmark.....	10
1.3 Objective.....	10
2. SUPERVISORY OFFICIALS	11
2.1 Manager Records.....	11
2.2 Chief Registry Official	11
3. REGISTRY PROCEDURES	12
3.1 Various Procedures.....	12
3.2 Filing of mail	15
3.3 Correct and neat filing	17
3.4 Application of a policy of document economy.....	17
3.5 Numbering of items in files	18
3.6 System of completing correspondence on files	18
3.7 Circulation of and end search for files.....	19
3.8 Outgoing mail	19
3.9 Movement of files (including SP files)	23
3.10 Closure and termination of files and records other than correspondence files	24
3.11 Keeping of Essential Registers/Schedules	25
3.12 Preparation and opening of file covers	26
3.13 Use of outgoing files.....	27
4. MAINTENANCE OF THE FILING SYSTEM AND RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE	27
5. DISPOSAL OF RECORDS	29
6. CONTROL AND PROTECTION OF RECORDS	33
7. TRAINING OF REGISTRY STAFF	36
8. CONCLUSION	36

PREFACE

The quality of the services which governmental bodies deliver to their clients and stakeholders depends on how well they can create, store, retrieve, use and manage relevant information to make decisions to act in pursuit of their business objectives. Most of the information generated by governmental bodies are contained in the records that governmental bodies maintain. A major problem for efficient service delivery is that relevant information often is not timeously available to enable governmental bodies to make informed decisions, because the records are not managed properly.

Governmental bodies need to control and manage records according to the legislation promulgated by government to enable government and the public to have timely access to accurate and reliable information.

Records management problems experienced by governmental bodies are amongst others the following:

- There is no top management support for records management or registry functions. Flowing from this the records managers do not have the necessary authority of backing to enforce proper records management practices throughout the bodies.
- No approved records management policies and control exists that compel officials to apply sound records keeping and records management practices.
- Consequently officials are not using the registry office but are keeping the records in their own offices. This results in information not being readily available at a central point preventing sound management decisions to be made based on authentic, reliable and relevant information

- The officials who are keeping records in their own space are not using the approved file plan (s) but are either piling the records in their offices or are compiling and using their own personal file plans
- Flowing from this there is no central control over the records and it is difficult to determine if records of transactions are created in the first place. It is also difficult to pinpoint which are the authentic official records
- Due to a lack of central control over the records and the lack of records management awareness amongst the staff, records are destroyed without disposal authorities being issued for them
- Some governmental bodies inherited or created records that are taking up valuable storage space
- They do not know what information is contained in the records neither do they have lists of the records available for retrieval purposes

A tendency exists amongst staff in most governmental bodies to take personal ownership of records and to keep them out of central storage areas where they are accessible and the information they contain can be shared. Hence the collapse of record keeping systems and registries all over the public service and the tendency to pile records in the offices of individuals.

Good record keeping is essential to governmental accountability in a democratic society. Records are indispensable in order to conduct official business. They provide evidence of what a governmental body has done, the dealings with individuals and other bodies, how it conducts its business, and why it took certain decisions.

Good record keeping is critical to the health and efficient operation of the day to day business of government. Knowing what records to create and the information they must contain, ensuring that they are created consistently and to a high level of quality, capturing records into record keeping systems, maintaining records appropriately and ensuring their accessibility and retrievability would ensure that evidence-based governance is the foundation of accountability in a democratic

society. It would also ensure that authentic records are created and maintained as part of the national archival heritage.

Records management and the resultant service delivery and information sharing problems can only be resolved if management actively intervenes to create a working culture where records management, information sharing and service delivery flourishes.

It is essential for governmental bodies to give specific consideration to managing records as a valuable asset. The legislative provisions in section 13 of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No 43 of 1996) are aimed towards promoting sound records management and thereby promoting transparency, accountability and better service delivery.

To support continuing service delivery and provide the necessary accountability, governmental bodies should create and maintain authentic, reliable and useable records.

Governmental bodies should also ensure that the integrity of the records is protected for as long as they are required as evidence of business operations.

The purpose of this strategic plan for the centralisation of records, is to explain to the staff members of Garden Route District Municipality what their records management obligations are in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act 1996 (Act 43 of 1996).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Act

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No 43 of 1996).

Appraisal

The process of determining the value and thus the final disposal of records and the decision regarding the preservation requirements of each record or series of records.

Archival value

Those values, administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential information, which justify the indefinite or permanent retention of records.

Archives

Records in the custody of an archives repository.

Archives repository

The building in which records with archival value are preserved permanently.

Case files

The most detailed or specific division in a file plan that creates a separate file for each person, place, institution or item.

Close volume

(1) Volumes of records in a current paper based file plan that have reached a thickness of 3 cm or have become full, after which a new volume has been opened

(2) In an electronic system of folder which was segmented into parts.

Correspondence system

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

Current records

Records that form part of a records classification system still in use.

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 National Archivist specifying which records should be transferred into archival custody or specifying which records should be destroyed or otherwise disposed of.

Disposal authority number

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

File/folder

An organised arrangement of records on the same subject accumulated in chronological order within the same cover/container.

File plan

A predetermined classification plan by which records are filed and or electronically index to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records.

File reference

A unique identifier for a file. This can be numerical, alphanumerical or alphabetical identifier. It is used to link a record to its specific subject file and subject grouping.

Filing system

The collective noun for a storage system 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.

Record

Recorded information regardless of form or medium, evidence of a transaction, preserved for the evidential information it contains.

Recording

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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statutory framework

The statutory framework in which sound records management is founded is the following:

The Constitution, 1996

Section 195 of the Constitution provides amongst others for the:

- effective, economical and efficient use of resources
- provision of timely, accessible and accurate information, and requires
- the public administration must be accountable

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, Act 43 of 1996

Section 13 of the Act contains specific provisions for efficient records management in governmental bodies. It provides for the Provincial Archivist

- to determine which record keeping systems should be used by governmental bodies
- to authorize the disposal of public records or their transfer into archival custody

The Public Finance Management Act, Act 1 of 1999 and the Municipal Finance Management Act, Act 56 of 2003

The purpose of this Act is to regulate financial management in the public service and to prevent corruption, by ensuring that all governmental bodies manage their financial and other resources properly.

The Promotion of Access to Information Act, Act 2 of 2000

The purpose of the Act is to promote transparency, accountability and effective governance by empowering and educating the public

- to understand and exercise their rights
- to understand the functions and operation of public bodies
- and effectively scrutinize and participate in decision making by public bodies that affects their rights

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, Act 3 of 2000

The purpose of this Act is to ensure that administrative action is lawful, reasonable and fair and properly documented

The Electronic Communications Act, Act 25 of 2002

The purpose of this act is to legalize electronic communications and transactions, and to build trust in electronic records

1.2 Benchmark

In support of the requirements of the National Archives and Records Service Act the Provincial and National Archives General Guidelines as the required benchmarking tool for records management and, in terms of its statutory mandate requires governmental bodies to put the necessary infrastructure, policies, strategies procedures and systems in place to ensure that records in all formats are managed in an integrated manner.

1.3 Objective

This strategic plan is issued in terms of the National and Provincial Archival legislation. The purpose of this strategic plan is to remind, guide, and provide information to the staff members of Garden Route District Municipality regarding the management of records in all formats in an integrated manner. The plan contains detailed information regarding the specific requirements and conditions for the management of public records. This plan is also used as a basis for the training of registry staff from the Garden Route District Municipality in order to be of assistance to the rest of the staff members.

1.4. Intended Audience

This strategic plan is applicable to all staff members of Garden Route District Municipality and must be retained by the manager records

2. SUPERVISORY OFFICIALS

2.1 Manager Records

The overall control, preservation and care of Garden District Municipality's correspondence files as well as records other than that correspondence not indexed on a file rest with the Manager Records. The concept "records" includes all documents and papers that are received or created in the process of running the office.

The Manager Records also exercises overall control of all the activities of the registry and personnel number procedural amendments concerning any records management practices that should be implemented. The various departments and sections which use the records other than those correspondence not indexed may store them in their respective offices, however the Manager Records is responsible for the control over those records and should have access to them at all time.

The Manager Records is solely responsible for the following non-delegable duties:

- Control of the maintenance of the filing system and the records control schedule disposal of all records
- Control over the safe preservation of all records
- Training of Chief Registry official
- The compilation of the Records Management Policy
- If any of the duties mentioned above need to be delegated during the absence of the official it should be assigned to a person with a similar or higher rank, but not to the Registry Official.

2.2 Chief Registry Official

The Chief Registry Official is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the registry staff, that includes training and supervision over registry procedures as stipulated below. Furthermore, the Official and staff are responsible for all tasks entrusted to

them by the Manager Records. No other task should be entrusted to the Chief Registry Official or registry staff without the permission of the Manager Records.

3. REGISTRY PROCEDURES

All official incoming mail namely receipt of post, parcels and remittances/registered mail must be gathered in a centralised area, the registry office

3.1 Various Procedures

3.1.1 Mailbag

- The Messenger collects the mailbag from the Post Office each weekday morning at 08:00. Post is sorted and appropriately dispatched, while outgoing post is sealed and stamped. With the outgoing mail, the mailbag is returned to the Post Office.
- The second collection of the mailbag is at 14:00, where after the post is sorted. With the outgoing mail, the mailbag is returned again to the Post Office.
- The key for the mailbag is stored safely in Registry and all the registry staff has access to the key.

3.1.2 Private mail

The official address of the municipality is exclusive only for the use of official mail. Officials were informed via official correspondence that they may not use this address for private mail, except if it is unavoidable (Resorts). All private mail received will be "Return to sender" (RTS). Registry staff does not take responsibility for private mail that were lost or damaged.

Receipt, sorting and opening of mail:

a) Receipt of mailbag:

- Mailbags are always sealed by the Post Office prior to delivery.

- When registry receives the mailbag, it must be opened and emptied by two Registry Clerks in the presence of the Chief Registry Official.
- At least two Registry Clerks must be present when opening mail.
- Where the Registry staff is not able to open the mail immediately, the mail will be secured in the strong room for opening at a later stage.
- Under no circumstances may only one staff member open mail. Messengers are not permitted to assist with the opening of mail.
- Incoming mail is opened twice a day at 09:00 as well as at 14:00. All official mail received outside the mentioned periods are locked unopened in a safe until the mail is opened again. However, mail which is marked urgent is attended to immediately.

b) Sorting of mail:

- Official letters addressed to persons by name are delivered to them unopened. However, if an official envelope is only marked for the attention to a particular person, it is opened by the registry staff and dealt with in the usual manner.
- Official secret and confidential envelopes are delivered unopened to the respective officials. After these items have been handed over the above-mentioned official, the registry accepts no further responsibility for the mail.
- All envelopes which indicate that the correspondence concerns staff members are delivered unopened.
- Incorrectly delivered mail is returned unopened to the Post Office, marked "Return to sender" (RTS).
- All mail addressed to the Mayor and councillors are delivered unopened to their Personal Assistants.

c) Procedure for opening mail

- The registry is closed from 09:00 till 10:00 and again from 14:00 to 14:30 to open, sort and distribute mail. Telephone enquiries and requests for files during these periods are limited to urgent and exceptional cases.
- Post is opened only on the post desk and should be moved as little as possible from one table to another.
- Envelopes are slit open on two sides to ensure that all the contents have been removed and, once emptied; the envelopes are immediately disposed of in the waste bin. Envelopes in which tender documents are received are dealt with as follows - Envelopes of unclaimed/undeliverable letters are attached to this letter.
- After the letters have been removed from the envelopes, it must be opened immediately and read to ensure that any annexure and monies referred to have actually been enclosed. If such items are missing, it must be neatly noted in the margin of the letter and initialled. In case where money is missing, or the amount differs from those mentioned in the letter, both officials must initial the note on the letter.
- Registered and certified postal articles are treated in the same manner as ordinary mail. These articles should be recorded in the register kept for this purpose.
- Incoming parcels are opened and dealt with in the same manner as incoming mail.
- Incorrectly delivered mail is returned to the mailbag.
- Incoming mail should immediately be opened by two Registry Clerks and the Chief Registry Official. It must then be decided whether the article should be delivered or scanned.

d) Receipt and handling of remittances

- Letters enclosed with money must be immediately separated from the other mail once it has been opened and handed to the cashier who notes it in the remittance register. Money which is either not enclosed or does not correspond with the amount mentioned in the letter must be noted in the margin and initiated by both officials opening the post and the cashier.
- In the remittance register the following should be recorded:
 - The date of receipt
 - Whether received by ordinary or registered post
 - From whom received
 - The nature of remittance
 - The amount of remittance
 - The signatures of the officials present at the opening of the mail
 - The signatures of official to whom handed over
 - The reference of the receipt issued and the method of disposal
 - The signature of the controlling official and the date of the cheque

3.2 Filing of mail

3.2.1 Application of date stamp and reference number

a) The date stamp is only applied to the first page of a letter. No annexure is stamped.

b) The date stamp must be applied to an open space on the letter. If the front of the letter has insufficient space, the date stamp should be applied to the back. Under no circumstances must any written or printed part of the letter be stamped as it could make important information illegible.

c) Cheques are stamped on the back.

d) Opened mail should immediately be divided into two groups, namely those on which the office reference number already appears and those that do not need any reference number and those to which a reference number must be allocated.

e) The following items do not receive any file numbers:

- Invoices
- Cheques
- Traffic fines

f) When a file number is allocated to all particular correspondence, it is written in the box as illustrated:

File number	5/4/1/1
Scan number	0315
Collaborator nr	306942

g) Letters with reference numbers must be dealt with as follows:

- The Chief Registry Official reads the letters thoroughly and carefully to determine the content of the letter (Under no circumstances should the subject be determined simply from the letter heading)
- Only the current approved file plan is used to determine the file numbers
- To determine the correct reference number, the list of main series is consulted and the most suitable series are selected. Then the different sub-series are consulted to eventually identify the correct file reference numbers.
- If there is still disagreement over the correct reference numbers the Manager Records is consulted.
- The letters are scanned into the Electronic system, namely Collaborator and a scan number and Collaborator number are applied on every letter. The Registry Clerks index the letters and submit it to the Chief Registry Official for the correct reference numbers and verification, where after it is submitted to the relevant departments for completion.

h) Reference numbers in respect of personal papers of staff are allocated as follows:

- All correspondence of staff members are filed on their respective personal files (e.g. personal files, leave files, housing subsidy files, study files, motor scheme files and bursary files).
- The names of the staff members are highlighted and placed on the files.

3.3. Correct and neat filing

- a) The registry clerks must always ensure that the correspondence they deal with is referenced correctly.
- b) When the reference numbers have been allocated to the incoming mail, the relevant files are drawn, the control sheets are completed and the document is numbered in the top right corner.
- c) Registry staff also ensures that correspondence is kept neat at all times and secure inside file covers in strict chronological order.
- d) Since the Garden Route District Municipality are working on an electronic filing system, Collaborator, files can only be removed from the registry office on request.
- e) In a case where a file is missing or misplaced, registry staff normally opens a "pencil file" (temporary file) (urgent circumstances). Attempts must still be made to trace the original file and when found, the contents of the temporary file must be amalgamated with the replacement file. The "pencil file" is closed.
- f) It must be ensured that all incoming mail and instructions on files receive immediate attention.
- g) Care must be taken to ensure that papers are neatly filed and bind. Attention must be paid to the correspondence which should be kept neat and tidy in the file covers. No papers should protrude from the files.

3.4. Application of a policy of document economy

- a) Both the Manager Records and the Chief Registry Official must ensure that the following policy of document economy is carried out:
 - Copies of reminders are not placed on files. Only the particular letter to which the reminder applies is endorsed.
 - Excessive cross-filing and duplication of papers on files must be prevented. Where duplicates of an item are made for any reason, those unused should be filed separately in a folder and not on the file.
 - Where identical letters are directed to more than one address only one copy needs to be placed on the file together with a list of the other addresses to which similar letters are sent and,

- Where a duplicate dispatch is made for the purpose of acknowledgement of receipt, the returned copy with the acknowledgement must be placed in the same file as the previous copy.

3.5 Numbering of items in files

- a) Each individual item placed on a file is numbered consecutively. The item is seen as an entity and receives only one number. Since the pages of any one item are not separately numbered, it is not necessary for the item's pages to be placed in the file in reverse order.

3.6 System of completing correspondence on files

NB: Only when electronic system is not used or as requested.

- a) It must be regularly ensured that all incoming post and instructions on the files receives attention. It is the duty of the registry officials to ensure that an instruction to file or pend is noted on every item before the particular file is replaced.
- b) In order to make these controls as effective as possible, the following procedures must be followed:
 - Control sheets are pasted in the front of every file cover
 - The registry staff place the documents received on the file, allocating the following item number on the file and enter the number in the first column on the control sheet.
 - The date on which the item is placed on the file is written in the second column
 - The item is then marked out to the official who will receive it
 - If the item refers to previous correspondence, the relevant item number of the correspondence is placed in the fourth column
 - When the original document is dealt with, in a certain manner, it is written on a new page with the following item number, and the details are written on the control sheet
 - Submissions which must circulate to various officials should be marked with only the following person's rank, or initials, in the third column
 - If the incoming correspondence resulted in a letter being dispatched, the copy for filing must be marked "file", the outgoing copy must be signed and

instructions should be given to Registry in the relevant column of the control sheet, whether the letter should be pending or filed.

3.7 Circulation of and end search for files

- a) Once incoming mail is placed on the files (after scanned in on the electronic system) the file will be put in safekeeping.
- b) Only in exceptional and urgent cases should registry staff be instructed to search for a file in an official's office.
- c) If files are missing, the registry staff compiles an inventory to determine the number of missing to speed up the search process.
- d) The offices are systematically searched by the registry clerks where after the correspondence is placed on the files and the control sheets are completed. The officials dealing with correspondence should be informed of the new correspondence being added to the file.
- e) Files should not be removed from an official's desk without his consent. If the official is absent, a note should be left stating that the file has been taken.

3.8 Outgoing mail

a) Instructions contained in the Postal Guide and Financial Manual

- Registry officials follow the Postal Guide and the Financial Manual instructions on matters like postal money, weight, measurements, packaging and registered post.

b) Rules for dispatch

- The Messenger brings all mail that must be sent off from the various offices to Registry.
- Officials must ensure that all mail to be sent off reach the registry office before 09:00 and 14:00. Mail received after the indicated periods will only be dispatched the next indicated period. Officials should inform the Chief Registry Official of urgent mail. These mails are attended to immediately.
- Letters and papers to be dispatched, should be folded neatly in the file cover and not placed on top of files nor attached in front with a paperclip. In this way outgoing papers are prevented from being soiled and detached from the relevant file or torn while being handled.

- The dispatching of all mail from the post table at registry is performed by the Messenger who acts as a dispatch clerk. Files with mail to be dispatched are placed on the counter by the Messenger.
- The dispatch clerk stamp the mail and checks if all the stamps, signatures and annexures have been added.
- The date that the letter was sent off should not be printed on the letter as the correspondence may not be posted on the same day and alterations will then have to be made. The date the mail is dispatched is stamped at registry.
- Mail that is ready for placement in envelopes is put aside while files are placed on the desk where they can be removed and filed by the registry clerks.
- Mail to be dispatched is placed in four separate groups, viz:
 - Ordinary post sent via the Post Office
 - Registered mail
 - Certified mail
 - Ordinary mail delivered via the Messenger
- In order to save new envelopes, items that need to be dispatched to sub offices are placed in use envelopes.
- To save time with the writing of addresses on envelopes, correspondence clerks who post mail can use window envelopes and address stamps.

c) Special dispatches

- The regulations in the Postal Guide should be strictly adhered to when dealing with sending of mail.
- Important documents and correspondence which for specific reasons should be signed by the addressee .
- The official who sends registered post should:
 - Ensure that special registered post envelopes are used and properly sealed
 - Stick a registry label in the top left corner with a tracking number thereon.
 - Compiles a list of the registered mail in duplicate in the registered book.
 - The registered book should accompany the mail to the Post Office where the original list is removed and proof of receipt applied to the duplicate copy.

- All registered mail should be handed in at the Post Office counter and must not be placed in the mailbag.
- Labels for registered mail are locked in the safe and are only issued by the Postmaster.
- Mail of value must be sent via certified post and requires the addressee's signature of receipt while unimportant mail must be sent via normal post.
- The certified mail label is glued in the left upper corner of the address face of the envelope while the duplicate is glued to the file copy of the letter. Certified mail is placed in the mailbag with ordinary mail and not recorded in the register.
- Only in very urgent cases will a letter be sent via express or preferential post.
- The Postmaster makes up the parcels and the registry staff attaches only the necessary postage stamps. Ordinary parcels are placed together with the other mail in the mailbag. For certified parcels the same procedures apply as with certified letters, while insured parcels are handed in at the Post Office counter. The delivery receipt received for such parcels is glued on the file copy of the covering letter. This controls the sent off of the parcel.

d) Processing of secret/confidential postal articles

- All staff working in the registry office must sign a pledge in terms of protecting of privilege and confidential information.
- Secret files are protected and managed by the designated officials as it is not the responsibility of the registry staff.

e) Pending of papers

- As Registry is merely carrying out instructions, it is not their responsibility to decide on the duration of pending files/documents.
- Reminders in terms of pending files is the responsibility of the relevant correspondence official.
- The registry officials keep a diary to manage the pending of files/documents. To pend an item, the registry staff member must follow the following procedures:
 - Record the file and item number in the relevant date column of the diary;
 - Complete the control sheet in the relevant file in the prescribed manner;

- Ensure that the pending inscription in his/her diary is cancelled if an answer arrives before the due date, thus preventing unnecessary requests for a file; and
 - Request registry to send the relevant file to the applicable official on the pended day if it has not reached the official by the second day.
- Similarly, the registry staff must record in their diaries on the correct date of the files that have been pended for that day. These details are obtained by checking the control sheets of all files before they are replaced. Files pending for a particular day are drawn by the registry clerks daily at 09:00. The Messengers must ensure that the files are taken from registry to reach the officials for finalisation before 11:00.

f) *Filing of papers and replacing of files*

- Before a file is replaced, the registry personnel must first ensure that:
 - All correspondence has received attention and that the instructions to file or pend have been complied with. This is ascertained from the control sheet in every file;
 - The cover of the file is neat and intact, that the correspondence is placed neatly onto the file, and the split pin is in one piece. All of these shortcomings must be corrected before a file is replaced;
 - Pins and paper-clips are removed, as they can rust and thus damage the documents; and
 - A file is not thicker than 3cm. When a file reaches this thickness, it should be closed and the next volume opened.
- Filing incoming mail and copies of outgoing letters must be submitted by the registry officials themselves.
- When all papers intended for filing have been placed on the split pin, care must be taken to ensure that the paper washer is placed on top. The washer protects the correspondence and holds it firmly in place.
- Documents must be filed in chronological order with the most recent date on top. An annexure or enclosure always forms part of the document with which it was received, regardless of the date thereon. The date of receipt, and not the date dispatched, is used to file incoming papers.
- Bulky documents, such as reports and minutes, are not filed with other documents, but are placed in annexure file covers. An indication of this must be given on the corresponding file. The annexure cover must supply the file

reference number as well as the words "Annexure Cover". No correspondence may be placed on this file.

- The files of the filing system are placed on the shelves numerically, according to the sequence of the Master copy. Personal files with reference to staff are filed alphabetically according to series (e.g. SP). Case files are filed in an appropriate cabinet.

3.9 Movement of files (including SP files)

a) Since the implementation of the electronic record system, no correspondence files are leaving registry. Officials who need files from registry must follow the following procedures:

- No personal files may be removed from or replaced by officials themselves. Files are requested and returned at the counter in the registry and are supplied, and replaced again only by the registry staff;
- Files should be requested by providing the file number, and not the description of the subject content or the file description;
- Files should not be kept for long periods in offices of officials, but should be returned to the registry as soon as possible. In cases where the matter cannot be attended to immediately, the file should be sent back to the registry until it is needed again; and
- Files may NOT be removed from the building.

b) Only case files may leave the building to the sub offices and are monitored. For this purpose, a card with the following information is placed in the usual space of the file:

- File number
- Where sent to
- Date of dispatch

c) Files returned from other sections must immediately be brought to the attention of the registry staff to remove the card. Specially prepared cards are available in registry for this purpose

d) Registry is responsible for administering all personnel files (SP), and **only** staff members who received authority from the Municipal Manager may sign for SP files. The procedure for collecting of SP files at registry is as follows:

- Official from Human Resources, Internal Audit and the Remuneration section who need a file sends an e-mail to registry for booking of files.
- The official who booked the file must collect (sign out) and return the file (sign in) in person (To be signed by both HR and registry)
- SP files may not be left unattended on the counter.
- All SP files must be returned to registry by Friday, for collection, if needed, on Monday.
- Copies needed must be identified by official from Human Resources.
- Official from Human Resources is responsible for the scanning of documents.
- Staff members who need information of their SP file must obtain prior approval from Human Resources. The view of SP files may only be done in presence of official from Human Resources.
- It is the responsibility of Human Resources and relevant official to inform registry when the surname of officials changed.

3.10 Closure and termination of files and records other than correspondence files

a) Closure at 3cm thickness

- Files should not be allowed to be more than 3cm thick.
- The closing procedure is as follows:
 - When a volume is closed, the date of the most recent correspondence is noted on the file cover. The date of commencement of the correspondence is noted on the cover once the first item is placed on the file after opening. A sheet of paper is placed as the last item in the closed volume containing the words "Closed, see vol. ___", which is also written on the file cover. The volumes are numbered consecutively. Letters and roman numerals must not be used. The correspondence is meticulously checked to ensure that each item is in place, and that no misplaced items appear on the file.
 - If the file cover is damaged or not presentable, it must be replaced with a new one.

b) Termination during transfer from one office to another

- Policy and subject files received from another institution when functions are transferred should be terminated immediately. No further correspondence may be added to these transferred files. These files may not be incorporated into the filing system and must be preserved as a separate entity.
- However, when case files are received during the transfer of functions, they may be incorporated in the filing system with written consent of the Western Cape Archives and Records Service. They may be renumbered and further correspondence filed on them, provided that the file is still required for existing correspondence. In cases where the file is no longer needed, it should be terminated and preserved as a separate entity.
- Financial books may be used until the end of the financial year in which they were received; where after they must be terminated. Only financial books which are used for recording long term transactions such as the payment of loans appropriation of capital funds are exempted from this condition.
- All other items of records other than correspondence files, except map collections and photos which, by their nature, cannot be terminated, must be terminated as soon as possible after receipt and preserved as a separate entity.

c) Filing of closed and terminated records

- All closed volumes or items from the approved filing system or Records Control Schedule are preserved in storage boxes on steel shelves. Under no circumstances should closed volumes of correspondence files be filed with current files on the shelves. This can lead to correspondence being accidentally placed on a closed volume, and not being finalised.
- Closed and terminated correspondence files can be filed in corrugated cardboard boxes for protection against light, dust and disintegration. Containers of corrugated cardboard are used for the filing of files. Single walled simplex cardboard with B-corrugated construction used for this purpose should have the following measurements: 368mm X 267mm X 95mm (outside measurements) with a 152mm lid. The containers can be ordered from Optiplan or Tidy files.

3.11 Keeping of Essential Registers/Schedules

a) Manager Records

- The following essential registers/schedules are kept by the Manager Records:

- The Master Copy of the filing system - this is the copy of the system in which all approved subjects are correctly and neatly reflected; and
- Records Control Schedule - on which every type of item, which is not part of the filing system, is indicated.

b) Chief Registry Official

- The following essential registers are kept by the Chief Registry Official:
 - Remittances received by post. This register must record all remittances received by post - whether by ordinary, registered or certified post;
 - Documents and correspondence received by registered and certified post. In this register, the number of the registered and/or certified items as well as the place of origin is noted. After receipt of the items, they are opened and details of the contents are entered into the register opposite the relevant slip number. If remittances are received, the details of the reference are entered into the remittance register;
 - Items sent by registered post;
 - Register of Files Opened - this is a register which accurately reflects what files are already opened according to the Master Copy of the filing system;
 - Destruction Register - this is a register which records details of all records which must be destroyed;
 - Disposal Authorities Register - this is a register in which details of all disposal authorities received from the Western Cape Archives and Records Service, are recorded; and
 - Stamp Register.

3.12 Preparation and opening of file covers

- a) File descriptions and numbers on files must be printed neatly with the aid of a ruler and black ink.
- b) The description of the subject on the files must agree with the description of the subject in the filing system. The General Instructions to the filing system must be strictly adhered to. The Main Series Description must in all cases be indicated on the cover. Where there is uncertainty as to the correct description, or where registry officials are unsure which components can be

omitted, the final decision must be made by the Manager Records. At all times, correct spelling must be emphasised.

- c) It should be indicated on the cover which volume of the file it is and, as soon as the first volume is opened, it should be marked Vol. 1. Only Arabic numbers may be used for this purpose.
- d) The Disposal Instruction with respect to each file must be recorded as soon as the file is opened. Disposal Instructions that have not yet been approved by the Western Cape Archives and Records Service should not be recorded on these files.
- e) Every file cover used must be provided with a card board file backing, a self-piercing type of paper fastener, 5cm long, and a cardboard washer. Control sheets are available in registry and should also be attached inside the front of every cover.

3.13 Use of outgoing files

- a) Officials may only keep daily files for a period of 24 hours where after it must be sent to the next official. They may request the file to be resent to them for further investigation.

4. MAINTENANCE OF THE FILING SYSTEM AND RECORDS CONTROL SCHEDULE

- a) Filing System
 - The Manager Records is responsible for the maintenance of the filing system. This includes:
 - Careful control over amendments and additions to the system to prevent its degeneration. The Manager Records should approve all such amendments and additions and should add them personally to the Master Copy of the system; and
 - Ensuring that correspondence is placed correctly prevents the subsequent deterioration of the system. The official exercises this control by means of the daily file, regular inspections and spot-checks the files in registry.
- b) With regard to amendments and additions, special attention must be paid to the following:

- Documents originating from new activities must not be forced into inappropriate files in the existing system. In such cases, new files, subjects or even main series must be created;
 - Faulty additions through which existing files are duplicated, or which overlap with existing subjects, or additions at incorrect places; and
 - The assurance that new descriptions satisfy the set requirements.
- c) As soon as the Manager Records has approved an addition or amendment, it must be immediately inserted in the Master Copy and thereafter, reported to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service. This reporting occurs, in the case of minor amendments and additions, every six months by means of amendment slips. These are numbered consecutively for every year (e.g. 3/1999, 4/1999) and are in stock in the registry. As soon as an amendment or addition is approved by the Manager Records, the Chief Registry Official completes official amendment slips for each official who deals with correspondence and has a copy of the system at his/her disposal. The slips are then supplied to these officials to make the amendments to their systems. A copy of each slip is kept together and sent collectively to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.
- d) In the event of wide-reaching amendments, the Manager Records may approve the amendment in principle and add the details in pencil to the Master Copy. Actual file covers can be opened in pencil and the task continued. In the meantime, the amendment is reported to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service and, as soon as approval is received, the provisions in the Master Copy and on the file covers may be finalised.
- e) With regard to the correct placing of correspondence, special attention must be paid to the following:
- Overloading of files not sufficiently subdivided, a too fine subdivision of files which could be combined, or a need for the re-division of files, should be brought to the attention of the Manager Records in good time, and be corrected;
 - The tendency to add correspondence, in circumstances where a subject began on a specific file long after the nature of the correspondence justifies the continuation of the subject on another file;
 - The correct use of policy files to prevent non-policy items from accumulating on them, yet simultaneously ensuring that copies of items containing policy decisions are actually placed on the relevant policy file.
 - The placing of ephemeral items on A20 files and valuable items on D files after a Disposal Authority has been issued to the system.

- f) For the time being, all correspondence concerning the filing system must be directed to the Regional offices of the Western Cape Archives and Records Service at the following address:

The Head,
Western Cape Archives and Records Service
Private Bag X9025
CAPE TOWN
8000

- g) Records Control Schedule

- The Manager Records is responsible for ensuring that all new types of records other than correspondence files used in the office are immediately added to the list and reported to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service along with the proposed disposal instructions.

- h) Separate Case Files

- The following series of separate case files are kept in:
 - Land- use case files
 - Provincial roads case files
 - Contract files

5. DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

- a) Disposal programme and destruction

- Standing Disposal Authority PBS 7KW applies to the current filing system and Standing Disposal Authority PSE1KW applies to the Records Control Schedule. The following symbols are used in these authorities to show the disposal for files and records other than correspondence files:
 - A20 - for valuable records which must be transferred to the Western Cape Archives Repository for preservation if a period of 20 years has elapsed since the end of the year in which the record came into existence;
 - D - for records of an ephemeral nature which can be destroyed after the number of years indicated alongside the "D". This date is calculated from the date of the youngest item on the file.

- b) In order to facilitate the destruction of files, the Chief Registry Official keeps a Destruction Register. As soon as a file or part of a file is closed, the number of

the file is written under the year in which it must be destroyed. At the end of every six months of every year, by consulting the Destruction Register, disposal officials must remove all the files which can be destroyed, and make arrangements for their destruction/removal. Files for destruction are removed by Registry clerks and temporary workers. All instructions and procedures concerning the removal of waste paper must be complied carefully.

- c) The registry staff must also ensure that destructible records other than correspondence files are disposed of when instructed by the Manager Records. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the Manager Records to ensure that records other than correspondence files which can be destroyed are brought to the attention of the registry personnel regularly.
- d) No files, or records other than correspondence files of any sort, may be destroyed without the written authority of the Western Cape Archives and Records Service. All authorities received from the Western Cape Archives and Records Service, and details of the records to which they refer, must be recorded in the Disposal Authorities Register by the Chief Registry Official. All instructions and procedures concerning the removal of waste paper must be complied carefully.
- e) The registry staff must also ensure that destructible records other than correspondence files are disposed of when instructed by the Manager Records. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of the Manager Records to ensure that records other than correspondence files which can be destroyed are brought to the attention of the registry staff regularly.
- f) No files, or records other than correspondence files of any sort, may be destroyed without the written authority of the Western Cape Archives and Records Service. All authorizations received from the Western Cape Archives and Records Service, and details of the records to which they refer, must be recorded in the Disposal Authorities Register by the Chief Registry Official.
- g) When any records are destroyed, a destruction certificate, in the form specified hereunder, must be submitted to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service:

"I certify herewith that the records appearing on the following list, which consisted of 3 linear metres shelf space, were destroyed today.

Signature: _____

Capacity : _____

Date : _____

No.	Description	Authority

- h) Records must be given in alphabetical or numerical order on the above-mentioned list. With regard to case files, it is sufficient to mention the subject under which the files are opened, e.g. 1/1 - 1/2000 Cases: Application for permits.
- i) The certificate must be signed by the Manager Records after he has ascertained that the records in question have actually been destroyed.
- j) The copies of these lists of destroyed records are preserved by the Registry staff in the appropriate files and should serve as proof in connection with any enquiries concerning the records at all times.
- k) In order to keep the Standing Disposal Authorities mentioned in par. 4.1.1 up to date, the Records Manager should approach the Western Cape Archives and Records Service regularly to approve disposal instructions regarding the new additions to the filing system and Records Control Schedule. All authorities that have been issued must be examined periodically by the Records Manager and must be revised as requirements and circumstances change. Proposals for the amendments of instructions must be reported to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.
- l) All correspondence concerning the disposal and destruction of records must be directed to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.
(see par. 3.1.6 for address).
- m) Transfer to archives repository/records centre
- Records which are marked for permanent preservation (A20 archives) must, in accordance with the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005) be transferred to the Western Cape Archives Repository if a period of 20 years has elapsed since the year in which the record came into existence.
 - The Manager Records /Chief Registry Official must personally liaise with the head of the repository/records centre to make transfer arrangements. The addresses and telephone numbers are as follows:

Western Cape Archives and Records Service

72 Roeland Street
Cape Town
8000
021- 483 0400

- On the other hand A20 records which have not yet reached the age of 20 years may be transferred to a local records centre.
- Archives transferred to the records centre, can be returned on loan. Records used regularly for administrative research and reference purposes should not be transferred to the records centre, as it can result in delays with consultation.
- When transferring to the archives repository/records centre the following procedure is followed:
 - The Manager Records informs the head of the repository/records centre beforehand of the nature of the records he/she intends to transfer by submitting a list of the records as shown below. The linear metres shelf space of the records must be provided;
 - The head of the relevant depot will then indicate if he/she can receive them.
 - The records to be transferred are accompanied by a list in duplicate which contains the following information:

"I certify herewith that the undermentioned records were transferred today to the archives repository/ records centre in

Name of body/office: _____

Street Address: _____

Extent in linear metres: _____

Name of official transferring the records:

Capacity: _____

Telephone number: _____

Date: _____

- Records are listed alphabetically or numerically;
- Unbound records are either packed neatly and securely with the parcels clearly marked in order, or boxed and numbered;
- Except where the Western Cape Archives and Records Service. Instructs otherwise, registers and indexes relating to the records are transferred too;

- Registers are stamped on the inside of the flyleaf with the office stamp, while the nature of the register is indicated on the cover; and
 - The head of the relevant repository/records centre will compare the records with the list and acknowledge receipt on the duplicate copy which will be returned to the body/office.
- n) Transfer occurs by road transport by obtaining three quotations as stipulated by the Supply Chain Management procedures.

6. CONTROL AND PROTECTION OF RECORDS

a) Access

- Access to records in the office not normally open to members of the public is controlled by the Registry staff in agreement with section 8 of the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005) and P.N. 122/2006 regulation.
- All requests from researchers and persons, who wish to consult records, must be submitted in writing. The Manager Records must personally make a thorough investigation as to the bona fides of the applicant to ensure that his/her perusal will not compromised the integrity of the office.
- Persons consulting records must do it in the Registry office under the supervision of the Manager Records .In this manner the Chief Registry Official must note that:
 - The greatest care must be exercised in the handling of the records, especially when turning pages;
 - Pages are not folded;
 - The researcher must place a piece of paper under his/her hand if he/she wishes to follow the section he/she is copying with his/her finger, so that his/ her bare hand does not rest on the page;
 - The researcher must only use a pencil or ballpoint pen to copy items;
 - The researcher must not disturb the order of the papers;
 - The researcher must not make any mark on the item or remove it;
 - If the researcher wishes to copy, photograph or microfilm the items, he/she must first obtain the permission of the Manager Records who must also ensure that the relevant items are not damaged in the process; and
 - No researcher may remove items from the office for any reason at all.

- The Municipal Manager or delegated person must first inspect and approve any researcher's research topic before approval can be granted. Such a researcher must also be requested to donate two annotated copies to the head of the office. One copy of this must be sent to the Western Cape Archives and Records Service.
- Officials must note that they have access to the records of the office only as far as is necessary for the carrying out of their duties.
- The Manager Records must ensure that no unauthorised person may, or is able to gain access to the registry, or records store rooms during or after office hours.
- The following rules apply:
 - The registry office are closed during lunch and after office hours
 - During office hours the registry should not be left unattended. If this does happen, the door must be locked at all times
 - The Manager Records exercises control over all the keys
 - The registry office may only be cleaned by cleaners in the presence of one or more registry staff.

b) Fire and fire prevention measures

- The lighting of matches, smoking and the storage of inflammable material or cleaning solutions in the registry office is strictly forbidden.
- Only CO₂ fire extinguishers may be used to extinguish a fire in a location where records are stored. Water, in all instances, must only be considered as a last resort.
- Fire extinguishers must be inspected every six months and the Health and Safety Officer must ensure that it is actually done. On their appointment, all registry personnel must learn to handle fire extinguishers.

c) Water

- Registry, and other areas where records are held, must be regularly inspected by the Chief Registry Official and the Manager Records to ensure that roof-leaks, leaks in water pipes, etc. are reported in time and repaired before damage can be done to the records.
- When records become wet for whatever reason, efforts to dry them must be made as soon as possible. The documents should be separated carefully and

dried between sheets of blotting paper. Warm air is then blown over them with a fan or hairdryer. Under no circumstances should wet documents be spread out to dry in direct sunlight.

d) Pests and plagues

- The registry, and other areas where records are stored, must be regularly examined by the Chief Registry Official and Manager Records to avoid the occurrence of pests and plagues. Officials who notice fish moths, cockroaches, etc. in any of these areas must immediately report it to the Chief Registry Official.
- Areas where records are stored must be fumigated every six months against fish moths and other pests.
- It must be noted at all times that no lethal sprays may be used which could have damaging consequences for the records. Sprays with a high acid content or which release acid, should be avoided. The safety of staff must also be taken into account.

e) Light

- The lights in the store rooms must be switched off whenever nobody is present in the area. The lights between the shelves in registry must similarly be switched off whenever files are not being filed or withdrawn.
- No direct sunlight must be allowed to shine on any records and for this reason the blinds in the registry office and strong rooms must be kept rolled down when direct sunshine is detected.

f) Damage through handling

- All officials must be aware that it is considered to be a violation of the Provincial Archives and Records Service of the Western Cape Act, 2005 (Act 3 of 2005) to deliberately damage records. This includes deliberate damage by careless and indifferent handling. Records must therefore be handled as carefully as possible. Careful handling also saves time and money because damaged file covers do not have to be changed as regularly.
- No food or drink may be consumed at a table or desk where records are placed. Glasses of water, bottles of cool drink, etc. must not be placed on cabinets or on shelves where files and records are stored.

7. TRAINING OF REGISTRY STAFF

- a) Both the Manager Records and the Chief Registry Official must attend the Records Management Course presented by the Western Cape Archives and Records Service to receive the correct training for their various tasks.
- b) The other registry staff can also be trained on the Course for Registry Clerks as well as the Records Management Course.
- c) In-service training under the Chief Registry Official occurs during the normal execution of duties and is conducted along the lines of the Registry Procedure Manual on a daily basis.

8. CONCLUSION

The above strategic plan for the centralisation of records is aimed at all the staff members of Garden District Municipality. The following correspondence is meant for all staff and it is being sent out on an annually basis as a reminder that everyone has the responsibility to communicate all official correspondence to the Registry and Archives Unit for processing and filing purposes.

Dear Colleagues

Garden Route District Municipality must ensure that the integrity of its records is protected for as long as these records are required as evidence of our business operations by managing the information resources in terms of the policy guidelines contained in the Provincial Archives and Records Services of the Western Cape Act (Act no 3 of 2005) and Regulations (P.N. 122/2006)

Therefore it is imperative that all officials who create records adhere to the requirements of the said Act. Furthermore, if any incoming correspondence is delivered to officials without the knowledge of the Registry and Archives Unit, the communication will run the risk of not being officially documented within the records management system. It is your responsibility to send all correspondence to Registry and Archives Unit.

For this reason, I advise you to always use the official email address, info@gardenroute.gov.za, or incoming fax number of council - 083 555 6303.

Also remember that official emails are considered to be a record and must be filed by the Registry and Archives Unit. The postal address of Garden Route DM is for official mail only. Please change the address of your private mail to your personal postal address.

I trust that I can depend on your full support and cooperation.

Yours faithfully

MG STRATU
MUNICIPAL MANAGER