

Accounting Officer System Statement



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Section one: Scope of the system

- 1.1 I am the Principal Accounting Officer for The National Archives. This System Statement sets out all of the accountability relationships and processes within my department, setting out where accountability sits at all levels of the system.
- 1.2 The National Archives is a non-ministerial department, and the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and for England and Wales. Its parent department is the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. It fulfils the remit of the Public Record Office, the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office for Public Sector Information and Her Majesty's Stationery Office. It works to secure the archival heritage of the nation. Its collection is accessible to everyone all over the world.
- 1.3 The National Archives:
 - is the custodian of the public record and government's trusted expert in managing, preserving and using information
 - provides access to and makes available more than 1,000 years of the nation's history, and connects people and communities with the millions of stories contained in its collection
 - leads and supports the archives sector, and help archives to build and develop the skills and capacity needed to sustain the nation's archival heritage
 - works with the academic community and others engaged in scholarly research across a broad range of disciplines, to provide solutions to the major challenges facing archives, and to open up greater access to archival collections
 - brings together the skills and specialisms needed to conserve some of the oldest historic documents, as well as leading digital archive practices to manage and preserve government information past, present and future
 - plays a leading role in addressing the cross-government challenge of preserving and making accessible the digital record of government.
- 1.4 The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has statutory responsibility under the Public Records Act 1958 for the public records system and is accountable to Parliament.

- 1.5 As Accounting Officer, I am personally responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which I have been given charge under HM Treasury's Estimate, and The National Archives' resources accounts, as listed in the Accounting Officer appointment letter.
- 1.6 This System Statement helps me ensure that I am fulfilling my responsibilities as an Accounting Officer, in accordance with HM Treasury's guidance as set out in *Managing Public Money*. It covers my department and describes accountability for all expenditure of public money through my department's Estimate, all public money raised as income, and the management of any shareholdings, financial investments and other publicly owned assets for which I am responsible.
- 1.7 This accountability system is in place at the date of this Statement, and will continue to apply until a revised Statement is published.

Jeff James
Chief Executive and Keeper, and Accounting Officer

19 July 2018

Section two: Responsibilities within the core department

- 2.1 As Principal Accounting Officer, I am personally responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which I have charge, for ensuring propriety, regularity, value for money, and feasibility in the handling of those public funds; and for the day-to-day operations and management of The National Archives. In addition, I ensure that The National Archives as a whole is run on the basis of the standards, in terms of governance, decision-making and financial management that are set out in Box 3.1 of *Managing Public Money*.
- 2.2 The operating structure is designed with a focus on meeting the needs of The National Archives' major audiences, and in tackling its single biggest strategic challenge – digital. The functions and duties of The National Archives are carried out by a number of directorates and an Executive Director is appointed to each.
- 2.3 The National Archives' Board is the key strategic advisory body, and comprises the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, an Associate Director, a Lead Non-executive Board Member and Non-executive Board Members. The National Archives' Executive Team (which comprises the Chief Executive and Executive Directors) are responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the organisation. The Audit and Risk Committee is the main oversight committee for the organisation. The Nominations and Governance Committee is a key forum for discussion of leadership development, succession planning and senior civil service pay.
- 2.4 Management information is reported monthly to the Executive Team. The role of the Executive Team includes managing improvements in business and financial performance, driving innovation, transparency and efficiencies that support delivery of strategic objectives and deliver value for money.
- 2.5 The Executive Team supports and informs the work of the Board. The Board's role includes ensuring the right information and evidence are available to make decisions, measure performance and provide assurance.
- 2.6 Further support to the Board is provided by the Audit and Risk Committee whose main purpose is to support the Board in their responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance. Challenge on the performance of the Board is provided by the Non-executive Board Members and other Board Members.

- 2.7 The National Archives' internal auditors provide a third party evaluation of the risk management, control and governance arrangements in place. The risk-based approach is agreed with the Executive Team and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 2.8 For further information on the responsibilities of the Boards and Committees, please refer to the Governance statement in The National Archives' annual report and accounts, which can be found on in the [Our performance](#) section of the website.

Section three: Local funding arrangements

'New Burdens' funding

- 3.1 Since 1 January 2015, specified local public sector organisations (magistrates' courts, prisons, coroners' courts, NHS bodies and some arms-length bodies) must now transfer records selected for permanent preservation to a place of deposit, in line with changes to legislation and the 20-year rule. 'New Burdens' funding has been made available from central government to cover the increased activity for local authority places of deposit during the ten-year transition period (£660,000), with smaller sums available to assist coroners (£50,000). Distributed via The National Archives, this funding will be made available for each year of transition.

Section four: Third party delivery partnerships

- 4.1 The National Archives uses third party delivery partnerships to support its work as leaders of the archives sector. One of those organisations, the Pilgrim Trust, acts on its behalf as a grant giver to archives across the UK under the Cataloguing Grants programme. The benefit of this delivery partnership is that the Pilgrim Trust has provided match funding to double The National Archives' contribution, as well as the grant giving mechanism and oversight by its own Trustees, in line with its obligations as a charity. Financial accountability is assured via review of progress reports from the fund recipients at agreed milestones. At the end of the project, the receipt of the final output report is required. The programme has now been reshaped in response to the review's recommendations, and there are plans to extend its reach even further.
- 4.2 Other organisations deliver a range of training, support and sector development work across the archives sector, for example, the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland). Formal agreements are mandatory for each agreement and approval is required at Executive Director level. Progress is monitored as appropriate, depending on the length/intricacy of the agreement.

Section five: Grants to private and voluntary sector bodies

- 5.1 The National Archives works with and has in place a grants system with other sister organisations to support a range of mutual strategic goals that benefit the archives sector, research and academia. Research Libraries UK is a consortium of 37 of the largest research libraries in the UK and Ireland, including the three UK national libraries. Jisc are a membership organisation which supports the digital skills needs of the UK's higher and further education sectors. These grants are subject to funding agreements, memorandum of understanding between both organisations, and a clear action plan with regular monitoring and reviews against progress.

Sector Sustainability Fund

- 5.2 The National Archives provides grants to a small number of private and voluntary sector bodies to support joint working and collaboration in research. An internal panel approves each grant, counter signed by both parties at appropriate organisational level. Delivery against agreed targets set out in the grant agreement and project plan is monitored by a regionally based team, with all recipients required to report on how they have delivered against the agreed targets. A final evaluation is required upon grant completion.

Major contract and outsourced services

- 5.3 The National Archives ensures value for money from its contracts through open competition for any new requirement with a value of £10,000 or more, using Crown Commercial Service frameworks wherever possible. Contract reviews are conducted with our key suppliers as appropriate. The National Archives procurement and contract management processes are subject to review as part of the internal audit programme.
- 5.4 The National Archives has one major contract in place, for Total Facilities Management with Bouygues E&S FM UK, which has a total value of £7.5m. This contract was competed via a Crown Commercial Service framework, incorporates a robust service level agreement and we undertake regular contract and performance reviews with the supplier.