



**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON
NATIONAL RECORDS AND ARCHIVES**

Date: 14 February 2025
Time: 11:00 – 15:15
Venue: The National Archives (TNA) and Video Link

Chair: Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls, Chair

Members: Mr David Rossington, Deputy Chair
Lady Moira Andrews
Ms Liz Copper
Dr Nigel Fletcher
Ms Kate Grimley-Evans
Mr Martin Howard
Professor Leon Litvack, Deputy Chair of the Forum (via video link)
Sir David Natzler
Ms Helene Pantelli
Mr Jonathan Scherbel-Ball

Minutes: Ms Jenna Birley, Governance Manager and Secretary to the Advisory Council (TNA)

Non-members:

TNA: Senior Access Manager
Ms Asha Bagayat, Head of Governance
Head of Government Services (via video link)
Freedom of Information (FOI) Manager (via video link)
Strategic Compliance Lead (via video link)
Ms Lucy Fletcher, Public Access and Government Services Director
Head of FOI Centre
Mr Saul Nassé, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Keeper
Governance Coordinator
Mr Sam Whaley, Head of Strategy and CEO's Office

MR's Office: Ms Crystal Hung, Legal Advisory to the Master of the Rolls

1. Welcome, introductions, apologies and declarations of interest

1.1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1.2. Jonathan Scherbel-Ball declared an interest in item 6 and would not take part in the discussion.

2. Minutes and matters arising

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2024

- 2.1. Subject to minor amendments proposed by members, the minutes of the November meeting were **agreed** as a true and accurate record.

Actions Log

- 2.2. The Secretary recommended the closure of actions 44, and 47 – 49 which were now complete.
- 2.3. The Action Log was **noted**.

3. The National Archives Update, CEO and Keeper's Report

- 3.1. The CEO and Keeper introduced his report which was taken as read.
- 3.2. Members noted the update regarding TNA's reclosure policy and were keen to be consulted during its redevelopment. Ms Lucy Fletcher confirmed that it would be discussed with Advisory Council members in due course.
- 3.3. Members asked for an update on the transfer of the Parliamentary Archives to TNA. Mr Saul Nassé advised that the transfer of records and services should be complete by the end of the year.

4. Administrative Items

- 4.1. Mr David Rossington introduced Advisory Council Working Group (WG) update which was noted.
- 4.2. Professor Leon Litvack provided an update on the recruitment of Independent Forum members which was noted by members.
- 4.3. Response to Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
Mr David Rossington had provided a draft response to DCMS's letter to the Advisory Council of 30 October and asked members for any further comments.

ACTION: Mr David Rossington to finalise the draft letter in order for the Advisory Council Secretary to send to DCMS on 19 February.

5. FOI Panel Update

5.1. The Head of FOI Centre presented this report, highlighting key metrics to members and thanking them for continuing to complete panel work within one working day.

5.2. Members noted the update.

6. Ministry of Defence (MoD) Memos

6.1. The Senior Access Manager introduced six updated MoD memos for agreement.

6.2. Members suggested an amendment to the wording for the memo regarding Chile.

ACTION: Mr Martin Howard to provide amended wording for this memo.

7. Departmental Retention Requests

7.1. Departmental applications

The Council considered papers from departments relating to the retention of records. Any recommendations for approval were to be advanced to the Secretary of State for ratification.

Applications for retentions of one to three years were received from the following Departments:

- Department for Work and Pensions
- Ministry of Defence

7.2. Applications for retentions of one to five years were received from the following Arm's Length Bodies (ALBs):

- Atomic Weapons Establishment
- Competition and Markets Authority
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Environment Agency
- Information Commissioner's Office

7.3. Applications for retentions of one to three years were received from the following Places of Deposit (POD):

- Postal Museum
- Tate

ACTION: The Advisory Council Secretary will write to departments to notify them of the Council's recommendations, including any which will go forward to the Secretary of State with regard to their retention requests.

Access to Records

7.4. The Advisory Council considered outstanding Departmental queries from September 2021 - September 2024 which included clarifications, revised applications and updates; withdrawn applications; applications carried forward; and the record of recusals.

7.5. The Council then considered the same from November 2024.

7.6. The Council then considered the same from February 2025. The Council was content to approve the applications on the basis of the clarification or additional information provided by the departments, subject to certain exceptions, which were either queried, withdrawn or carried over to the next meeting, as the relevant department had yet to respond.

7.7. The Council noted comments on applications to close records under draft FOI Schedules 168 and 169 and Retention Instrument 160.

8. Any Other Business

8.1. Members were asked to note the two upcoming events to which they had been invited.

8.2. Members discussed a potential training session proposed by Lady Moira Andrews.

ACTION: The Advisory Council Secretary to look at arranging this session for the training meeting in September 2026.

The meeting closed at 15:15.