

Response received via email

Further to the document we have received on the above subject inviting us to give comments, we give below the comments from Ordnance Survey

There is very little to say regarding paper files and records, the main area of concern will be regarding electronic files.

Ordnance Survey welcomes the proposals to reduce the reviewing of paper records from 30 to 20 years for the following reasons:

- reduction in storage requirements.
- shorter knowledge retention enabling easier review of records.

Conversely a 20 year review period for electronic records is liable to raise a number of issues which will be difficult to control or manage. In 2007 Ordnance Survey implemented the Towersoft TRIM electronic documents and records management system. To date over 85,000 electronic documents have been saved to the system. Whilst the vast majority will not become permanent records, the extent to which the system is being used gives an indication of the number of records which may require review after 20 years. To place this in context, over a period of 15 years of saving electronic documents to shared servers Ordnance Survey amassed some 6.5 terabytes of documentation which staff are now being requested to review before transferring the documents into TRIM. This is proving a substantial task.

Were a 20 year review implemented with such massive amounts of data, at the time of review the resources required would need to be increased to meet business and National Archive requirements. Additionally there would be a burden to maintain systems so that, for arguments sake, 'MSBlueSky 2026' would be required to access and convert Windows 2000 format documents for use in systems in place in 20 years time, placing additional avoidable strain on Information Technology departments. Currently our records department has to move the records system to a new requirement as MS Office 2003 no longer supports the original software. Again shorter knowledge retention enabling easier review of records needs to be considered as undoubtedly working practices will change within the civil service over the next 20 years, increasing difficulties with regard to retention of corporate knowledge.

Consequently Ordnance Survey would welcome a closer look at the issues surrounding the retention and review of electronic records, at least considering the possibility of a '10 year rule' for reviewing electronic records which would account for most shorter term financial and contractual schedules.

I hope this is helpful.

Best Wishes.

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