

## INDUSTRY

Public Sector

## CHALLENGE

Review information retention policy and release space for office move and flexible working

## SOLUTION

Consultancy and offsite records management service

## VALUE

- Streamlined and standardised management approach
- Improved information security and compliance
- Around 35% cost saving

## CASE STUDY

### CROYDON COUNCIL

## SAVING ON PROPERTY AND SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKING

### OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND TAX PAYER SAVINGS

Croydon Council provides around 75 different services - including housing, planning and benefits - for local people, businesses and visitors. As part of an efficiency drive it decided to consolidate all services at a single site, creating a new environmentally-friendly civic centre called Bernard Weatherill House.

That change would see 11 Council buildings close, saving the local taxpayer more than £2 million a year from reduced running costs. The move would also free up land for retail, leisure and residential development.

To get even greater efficiency the Council wanted to adopt flexible working by introducing hot desks and restricting filing space to less than two linear metres per person. Any archivable documents would need offsite storage.

### DETAILED AUDIT

Some departments held records locally, but it was clear there would be insufficient space for this practice to continue at Bernard Weatherill House. So, the Council turned to its longstanding storage partner, Iron Mountain®, for support.

Amanda Riggall, Head of Facilities at Croydon Council, says: "The office move was the ideal opportunity to review our document retention policy, audit stored papers, set retention dates, dispose

of unwanted material and consolidate the remainder offsite with a single vendor."

The Council's initial audit revealed over 17 million paper records equating to nearly 12 linear kilometres of files. It set a target to reduce this by 57% overall and earmarked 39% for offsite storage.

A wide variety of material needed to be archived - from Council meeting minutes, financial reports and documents of historical significance to planning applications, environmental reports and child health records. However, not all records held were accurately catalogued, nor were retention dates always sufficiently clear.

### BEST PRACTICE SHARING

With cost efficiency of paramount importance - and the prospect of needing to store more material offsite - the Council also wanted to achieve economies of scale and be satisfied that it was paying a fair market price for records management services.

"Iron Mountain also offered to help us develop our information retention policy based on best practice, as well as assist with our data cleanse project in collaboration with our other service suppliers as one team working together," confirms Amanda Riggall.



**"IRON MOUNTAIN HAS BEEN A REAL PARTNER IN HELPING TO MOVE TO MORE STREAMLINED WAYS OF WORKING AND ITS CONTRIBUTION WAS VITAL TO OUR PROPERTY RATIONALISATION PROGRAMME."**

**Councillor Sara Bashford**  
**Cabinet Member - Corporate and Voluntary Services**  
**Croydon Council**

The initial focus was on applying the new document retention policy and the transfer of centralised onsite records to Iron Mountain storage facilities. Boxes were catalogued and transported from Council offices, typically at a rate of around 250 per day. Moreover, as a result of the review and consolidation exercise around 4,000 boxes of files deemed to be of no further value were securely destroyed by Iron Mountain.

## FOSTERING A DIGITAL CULTURE

The next priority was to help employees review the continued need for local records. Amanda Riggall says: "Iron Mountain suggested new ways of storing and accessing our documents as well as being a key part of our 'store-it, scan-it, scrap-it' days, promoting a change of culture towards improved information management."

Certain document types are now routinely scanned and stored electronically, with the originals either destroyed or catalogued and boxed for long term offsite storage with Iron Mountain.

Iron Mountain also helped the Council upgrade from a manual to a fully automated management system, developing an electronic transmittal sheet, now available via the Council intranet, to allow people to catalogue documents and place a request for collection and offsite storage.

## EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Croydon Council has streamlined and standardised information management processes, improved security and reduced cost. Amanda Riggall adds: "Even more files emerged from cupboards and under desks, so we actually securely disposed of almost 24 linear kilometres of files.

Records are now better organised and securely stored yet remain easily accessible, making it more straightforward for the Council to, for example, comply with freedom of information requests within prescribed timescales. Moreover, all records have been re-catalogued and now have destruction dates assigned, simplifying future inventory management.

Document storage and retrieval requests are processed via the Council's outsourced administration services team, which has been trained to use the Iron Mountain Connect™ online portal, the Iron Mountain customer portal. There is a weekly collection of new records for storage and daily delivery of retrieved files as required.

**"WE REDUCED STORAGE COSTS BY ALMOST 35% AND WE ARE BENEFITING FROM ADDITIONAL ONGOING SAVINGS FOLLOWING THE DESTRUCTION OF UNWANTED FILES."**

**Amanda Riggall**  
**Head of Facilities**  
**Croydon Council**

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### ABOUT IRON MOUNTAIN

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