

# Flexible inventory for near-instant document retrieval helps council save significant costs

## An inefficient legacy setup

If you manage an English county steeped in history and heritage, then the spirit of preservation runs deep. But one such county council faced a significant challenge in managing its extensive archive of records. Council documents were distributed across multiple mixed-use buildings throughout the county, often in spaces not designed for long-term storage. This made it time-consuming and inefficient for staff to retrieve information when needed, impacting day-to-day operations and decision-making.

The existing approach lacked scalability and was increasingly difficult to manage as the volume of records grew. It also placed a strain on resources, both in terms of physical space and administrative oversight. With the opening of a new head office, the council's senior management saw an opportunity to rethink its approach. There was a strong drive to streamline operations, reduce reliance on outdated storage methods, and free up property assets that were no longer essential.

Recognizing the need for a more modern, secure, and cost-

effective solution, the council initiated a strategic review of its records management practices. This marked the beginning of a transformation aimed at improving accessibility, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, and supporting more agile and responsive public services.

## Attractive commercial conditions

Iron Mountain was immediately attractive as the only provider that could offer the economy and security of a Crown Commercial Service contract through the UK's biggest public procurement organization. Following a 2015 site visit, the council opted to consolidate its document storage at Iron Mountain's Kemble facility, near Cirencester in the Cotswolds, under a seven-year contract starting 2016.

This contract length allowed the council to maximize the financial efficiency of the deal. Iron Mountain, meanwhile, was able to support the council's requirement for improved inventory management by having physical assets secured in one place, with the ability to manage and reduce the document estate.

## Industry

Government

## Challenge

Reduce costs while improving document management efficiency, reducing documentation-related risks and providing flexibility for other services.

## Solution

Iron Mountain® digitalisation programme, including compilation, validation, and creating a central repository to store all documents.

## Value

- > Financial and space savings
- > Streamlined workflows and productivity gains
- > Reduced risk of document loss or damage



So far, the service has been flawless, according to the council's freedom of information and records lead. "The functionality we get from Iron Mountain is spot on," he said, and the council renewed its contract in 2023, for another seven years.

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### **A flexible and efficient service**

The functionality in question is simple: almost all the council's paper documentation is stored at one Iron Mountain site and can be retrieved via the Iron Mountain Connect™ web portal. Users are encouraged to review any documents they retrieve and destroy the material if it is no longer needed. The council also gets Iron Mountain to securely destroy out-of-date records, with the aim of reducing storage volumes over time.

There are times when volumes go up, though. During an 18-month refurbishment of a council-owned historical center, around 1,000 boxes of the center's historic records were moved offsite for temporary storage. The whole operation went seamlessly.

### **Multiple benefits**

One of the key advantages the council gains from its partnership with Iron Mountain is added flexibility. "The main point is that working with Iron Mountain is more efficient

than managing this function internally," said the freedom of information and records lead.

For one thing, the council avoids the need for additional office or storage space and staffing by not managing documents on site. Then, thanks to Iron Mountain Connect, locating and retrieving documents is much easier than it used to be. On the rare occasions when Iron Mountain cannot locate a document, it is usually because the council has not catalogued the contents of a box correctly. But the times that staff have a problem "wouldn't even go into double figures" in a year, said the freedom of information and records lead. "In the past eight years, I don't think I've ever had a complaint," he added. "The only time I ever hear anything from a user, it's to say either they need a new account, or they have lost their password. Iron Mountain Connect is intuitive. It's obvious what you need to do."

Ultimately, the customer is happy with the partnership. "It's a single point of contact," he said. "It's efficient, the software is good, the service is good and the guys who come in to deliver and retrieve the boxes are always helpful. Simply put, Iron Mountain effectively supports our requirements and has enhanced our organizational efficiency—we couldn't ask for a better outcome."

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