AN ASSESSMENT OF THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WITH REFERENCE TO THE AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

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In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/dissertation/thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

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To my late mother who helped me understand the value of education. She laid a solid foundation, which undoubtedly sustained me during these years of studying. This treatise is dedicated to her.
**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADM:</td>
<td>Amathole District Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTO:</td>
<td>Budget and Treasury Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP:</td>
<td>Integrated Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NARS:</td>
<td>National Archives and Records Services Act 43 of 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIA:</td>
<td>Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PFMA:</td>
<td>Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCM:</td>
<td>Supply Chain Management Unit</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 13 of the Eastern Cape Provincial Archives and Records Act, 2003 requires the Amathole District Municipality to manage its records in a well-structured record-keeping system, and to put the necessary policies and procedures in place to ensure that record-keeping and records management practices comply with the requirements of the Act. The study investigated the interventions that can be made to improve and promote the best system (centralised versus a decentralised records system) in terms of space resources through greater co-ordination of information management and storage systems with reference to the Amathole District Municipality.

A quantitative research methodology was employed to collect data. The empirical component of the treatise utilised self-administered questionnaires. Purposive sampling was used to identify the target population at the ADM. The researcher specifically selected the users of records, namely: senior manager, mid-managers, supervisors and administration assistants. The need for training, workshops and awareness were identified as the main challenges to records management and to the employees’ understanding of the system in place at the ADM.

The findings recommended that the municipality should select the records management system that best supports the conduct of business in an orderly, efficient, and accountable manner. The system should ensure that documents provide evidence of business and contribute to the cultural identity and collective memory of the ADM. Further research on the existing records management system is recommended for the Amathole District Municipality.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives the background to and rationale of the study, and further covers the problem statement, research question, and objectives of the study. The outline of the study is presented in the form of chapters. The chapters provided the background for the study, literature review, the distinctions of a decentralised and a centralised records management system, research methodology and the overall conclusion and recommendations.

1.2 BACKGROUND

In terms of Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, as amended, there are three categories of municipalities namely: metropolitan, district and local municipalities. In the Constitution, they are also referred to as categories A (metropolitan), B (local), and C (district). The Amathole District Municipality (hereafter referred to as the ADM), on the seaboard of South Africa, is a category C municipality which was established after the local government elections in December 2000. Amathole District Municipality is situated in the central part of the Eastern Cape stretching from the Indian Ocean coastline in the south to the Amathole Mountains in the north, and from Mbolombo Point in the east to the Great Fish River in the west. The district lies at the heart of the Eastern Cape Province with its headquarters based in East London and is presently home to about 1.7 million people. The district has seven local municipalities namely: Amahlathi, Great Kei, Mbhashe, Mquma, Ngqushwa, Nkonkobe and Nxuba, each containing at least one urban service centre (http://www.municipalityguide.co.za/amathole-municipality).

The role of the Amathole District Municipality is to deliver services to its citizens. This role should be aligned to its Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and budget. To carry out its mandate effectively, the ADM should have sufficient resources, information management being one of the key resources required to run an efficient organisation although it is often underestimated by most government bodies. According to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (2007) the quality of the service which municipalities deliver to their
clients and stakeholders depends on how well they can create, store, retrieve, use and manage relevant information to make decisions to act in pursuit of their objectives. Most of the information generated by the Amathole District Municipality is contained in the records that the institution maintains.

According to Van der Waldt, Van Niekerk, Doyle, Knipe and Du Toit (2002:129), information is a fundamental resource to both government and the private sector alike. Van der Waldt et al (2002:129) further assert that information can be maintained and enhanced through proper records management. It is critical to define a record as it forms the core of the research project.

The National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act 43 of 1996 as amended, defines a record as recorded information regardless of form or medium. The Act further states that records are created for the purpose and, as evidence of transactions, they have on-going use as a means of management, accountability, operational, continuity, legal evidence and disaster recovery. These records can support evidence-based governance and service delivery. They also contain the memory of governmental decision-making and its impact. A record forms the basis of good governance, effective and efficient administration. It enables the institution to have timely access to accurate and reliable information and perform its functions effectively and successfully.

It is noted that records are the output of the business and administrative processes of any municipality. In other words, they provide proof that a business or administrative process was transacted. In some cases records also have a bearing on the rights of citizens. The National Archives and Records Service’s role is to promote efficient administration by means of regulating the records management practices in government bodies to ensure the sound management of their records. Records management is a logical and practical approach to the creation, maintenance, use and disposition of records and consequently of the information that those records contain.

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Penn, Pennix and Coulson (1994: xi) state that “the focus of records management is on creation, evaluation, storage, access retrieval, duplication, dissemination, use and disposition of recorded information.” In addition, the study seeks to focus on a system that best suits the municipality to implement proper management of its records and as such has the potential to contribute to effective service delivery.

The researcher draws attention to the statutory and regulation framework in which sound records management is founded:


Section 195 of the 1996 Constitution provides amongst others for the:

- Effective, economical and efficient use of resources;
- Provision of timely, accessible and accurate information; and
- Requires that public administration must be accountable.

National legislation enacted to give effect to the above-mentioned provisions are the following:

**The National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act 43 of 1996, as amended**

Section 13 of the Act contains specific provisions for effective records management in government bodies. It provides for the National Archivist:

- To determine which record keeping systems should be used by governmental bodies;
- To authorise the disposal of public records or their transfer into archival custody; and
- To determine the conditions –
  - According to which records may be microfilmed or electronically reproduced;
  - According to which electronic records system should be managed.
The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Regulations (R158 of 20 November 2002)

Part V: Management of Records contains the specific parameters within which governmental bodies should operate regarding the management of their records.

The Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 and the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003

The purpose of the Act is to regulate financial management in the public service and to prevent corruption, by ensuring that all government bodies manage their financial and other resources properly.

The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000

The purpose of this Act is to promote transparency, accountability and effective governance by empowering and educating the public:

- To understand and exercise their rights;
- To understand the functions and operation of public bodies; and
- To effectively scrutinize, and participate in, decision-making by public bodies that affects their rights.

Kanzi (2010:27) highlights that records play a significant role in a municipality throughout the stages of Integrated Development Planning, for example, in the following IDP stages: development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reviewal. With sound records management, it is proposed that the ADM could improve accountability, decrease unethical behavior and corrupt practices, which appear to have affected the confidence of the public towards the municipality.

The ADM has seven departments, namely; Engineering Services, Community Services, Corporate Service, Land, Human Settlement and Economic Development, Budget and Treasury Office, Strategic Planning and Management and Legislative Support Services. Each Department is engaged in the proper management of its records since it is a cross-departmental responsibility. Important to note, however, is that Corporate Service is the custodian of records for the whole institution except for financial transaction (statements and
invoices), which are maintained by the Budget and Treasury Office. Tender documents remain the responsibility of the Supply Chain Section which is under the jurisdiction of Budget and Treasury Office.

The Corporate Services Department has its records units as follows:

- A Central Registry/Records Office responsible for safekeeping the institution’s records; and

- Human Resources personnel who are responsible for the security and management of the personal files/records.

According to a Technikon South Africa Study Manual, APP301, (2000:17) a centralised registry is one where records of common interest to all employees are placed in one location under the control of one supervisor. Registering the records includes the recording of the details of all records that enter and leave the registry. A decentralized registry is one where records created and used by one department are stored in that particular department.

Kanzi (2010:16) argues that the appropriate use of proper records management systems leads to clear administration in a municipality. This then is to ensure the orderly and efficient flow of information that enables the ADM to perform its functions successfully and efficiently. The primary purpose of this study is, therefore, to discuss the effects of a decentralized records management system in relation to the Amathole District Municipality. Attention will be paid to effective interventions that can be made to address the proper records management system in order to ensure that the provision of services to communities is carried out in an efficient and sustainable manner.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The aim of the study is to evaluate the challenges encountered by a decentralised records management system in the ADM. There are notable dysfunctions as far as the decentralisation of records management systems is concerned. It is often argued that, an appropriate records management system can lead to a more efficient administration (http://www.national.archives.gov.za/rms/best-practice.htm).
The primary objective of this study was to investigate the current challenges facing the decentralised records management systems at the ADM. This records management system should form part of the strategic objectives and business plan of the Amathole District Municipality. It appears that inadequate attention has been given to the budgeting function for records management systems resulting in inadequate financial, human and technological resources allocated to support the records management function.

The researcher observed that the employees do not regard the management of records as an important function for the organisation. The researcher made further investigation whether the Integrated Development Plan is adequately aligned with the ADM’s Capital Budget to provide adequate funding for proper records management at the Amathole District Municipality. It appears that currently (2014) there is inadequate financial support.

The above observations aroused an interest in the researcher which led to undertaking of this study which seeks to sensitise the municipality about the importance of proper and efficient recordkeeping at the Amathole District Municipality. Through the exercise of evaluating the challenges the researcher has identified has hopefully led to the improvement of proper management of records and the effective role of a suitable records management system. The study has investigated the best system for records management - whether ‘centralised’ or ‘decentralised’ at the ADM. The key findings of the study were forwarded as a report to the Municipal Manager and the Municipal Council for consideration.

1.4 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

It is hoped that the study will assist the municipality to adopt the most suitable records management system, that is, either a centralised or decentralised system. Currently records are maintained at individual work stations. The researcher was investigating whether all records should rather be part of the organisation’s office file plan so that all employees know exactly where the records are located. The final report contributes to providing an insight into how a decentralisation records management system affects the management of records in an organisation. Emphasis was placed on the ADM which forms the focus and locus of the study.
1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

According to The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary (1978:719, 1162), an objective is defined as a “point aimed at…point towards…object or purpose aimed at an action.”

The focus aim or specific objectives of the study were:

- to examine the effects of a decentralised records management system on proper records management.
- to assess strategies that senior management can utilise to identify factors contributing to improper records management system;
- to propose remedial strategies that will improve the records management system at the Amathole District Municipality; and
- to enhance awareness and sensitise the ADM management to prioritise records management as an important function and resource for the institution.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTION

The study proposed the following primary research questions:

Firstly: Does a decentralised records management system have positive or negative effects on proper records management?

Secondly: Are there any factors that contribute to the organisation’s lack of engagement in a proper records management system and records procedure manuals?

Thirdly: Does the ADM have induction and awareness programmes on proper records management systems?

Fourthly: Does the ADM comply with applicable legislative prescriptions and implement new measures to mitigate records management challenges?

Lastly: Does the Amathole District Municipality capacitate employees with skills and knowledge to make them familiar with how to manage a records system?
Mle and Maclean (2010:3) argued that for practitioners in the public sector, especially for public managers, it is important that there be guidelines according to which they must cooperate with the institution and administer its information and according to which they must direct the public service and place subordinates on the right track precisely to eliminate maladministration. These procedures and guidelines should be available in properly kept documents and manuals which more often than not are dependable reservoirs of institutional memory. Therefore, this emphasises the importance of records in an institution.

1.7 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The researcher believes that the cornerstone of any organisation’s institutional memory is a centralised and well co-ordinated records management system. Most institutions lose valuable information owing to the decentralisation of records management, which is maintained in various sections of the organisation by people who often have no training and expertise on records management. An official who does not have a binding legal responsibility in terms of his or her employment contract to keep documents cannot be held responsible for lost documents. Ethically and morally he or she does not value the importance of the confidentiality of some records and the safekeeping of records generally. The effects of a decentralised records system are bound to be negative and to be of not much help to the integrity of records management.

According to Stoner and Freeman (1989:48) executives of an organisation have a duty to instil a sense of moral purpose in their employees, and to think beyond their narrow self-interest and to make an ethical commitment to society. This starts with the respect employees must have for the official documents of their organisations. The full co-operation of the users of documents is necessary to file documents to the filing system and protect records against loss and damage. One centre of accountability for information management is the most appropriate approach.

Proposed hypothesis:

For purposes of this study the researcher proposes that a decentralised records management system is less efficient and effective compared to that of a centralised system.
CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this study is the assessment of records management system. The proposed system could be appropriate for the ADM as a public institution. The proper management of records is crucial in an institution. To attain the objective of the study it is necessary to understand the directives enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act, 1996. The problem statement and hypotheses proposed the remedies for the best system on records management practices.

The next chapter contains the literature of the study.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Government bodies should recognise their responsibility to the public by implementing and monitoring sound records management practices. This chapter briefly describes key principles governing records care and the role of effective standardised records management in an organisation. It also examines some aspects relating to the centralised system and effects of decentralised records management systems and archival legislation. It raises the issues of the relevant implementation of classification systems, good governance and anti-corruption factors relating to records management strategies.

2.2 BASIC CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

2.2.1 Records

Records are defined as recorded information regardless of form or medium created, received and maintained by an agency, institution, organisation or individual in pursuance of its legal obligation or in the transaction of business. A record can be any medium and any format: paper (any size or type); film; magnetic (computer discs and tapes) and optical (WORM disc, CD-ROM). Records provide evidence and information (Records Management Policy, 2004: x).

The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act 43 of 1996, defines a record as recorded information regardless of form or medium. Examples of form are correspondence, files, maps, plans, registers, among others. Examples of medium are paper, microfilm or electronic format. According to Cook (1993: 93-94), a record must be remain auditable in order to determine its authenticity for legal purposes. All the processes to which the record has been subjected must be able to be verified, that is, use, viewing, indexing, classifying and filing.

It is noted that a record is recorded information, evidence of transactions, containing resolutions of minutes in the case of local government departments preserved for the evidential information it contains. It demonstrates and confirms the decisions taken by the organisation, actions carried out and the results of those actions.
2.2.2 Records management

According to Benedon (2000:3), records management refers to the maintenance and use of current records. Records management is the management of information resources in a manner that makes information easily accessible, securely protected, stored and disposed of when no longer required for administration, legal, executive and operational purposes (Harris 2000: 40). Records management controls the entire life cycle of the records, from creation or receipt, to maintenance, use and eventual disposal.

Cook (1995: 80) argues that records management also encompasses managing and ensuring that the electronically generated information remains readable and accessible whenever it is required. Authors generally agree that records management is a process of ensuring the proper creation, maintenance, use and disposal of records to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable governance. A records management system results in a source of information about business activities and business decisions, as well as ensuring accountability to present and future stakeholders (ISO 15489-1, 2001: 4).

According to Dearstyn (1985: 6), records management is about overseeing the creation and use of forms, correspondence, and other records, setting up filing and indexing systems and other means of ensuring easy, rapid access to the information in records, adopting and using modern technology in information creation, storage and manipulation, and the long-term preservation of important information and the systematically disposing of records. This definition is shared by a number of authors who contend that records management entails every stage of records care from the time of creation to the records disposal (Ngulube, 2001:155-173; ISO 15489-1, 2001:4).

2.2.3 Records life-cycle concept

Penn, Pennix and Coulson (1994: 12) state that the management of the life cycle of a record forms the basic principles of records management. The life cycle concept is based on the theory that recorded information has a ‘life’ similar to that of a biological organism; it is born (creation stage), it lives (distribution stage), and has a use stage; then there is a storage and maintenance stage and eventually it dies (disposition stage). According to Mnjana (2006:6-9), records have a life cycle. The author further proposes that as records are created or received, they need to be maintained and eventually disposed of when they are no longer needed for
administrative functions. In accordance with the above-mentioned Act, the records managers of all South Africa governmental bodies are responsible for overseeing the entire life cycle of the records in their respective governmental bodies.

2.2.3.1 Types of records

As discussed by Wright (1992: 57-62), all records have values. Below are the examples of types of records to show their different values:

2.2.3.1.1 Vital records

These records may include items like legal papers of incorporation, files of ownership, deeds, major contracts, property plans, reports of shareholders, minutes of directors’ meetings and insurance policies. These records should never be destroyed as they are essential to an organisation’s existence and are often irreplaceable. In addition, vital records are records that protect the legal, financial, property and other rights of the body; and those needed to continue operational responsibilities under disaster conditions (Technikon South Africa, APP301, 2000:8).

2.2.3.1.2 Important records

Important records are those records that facilitate administrative and executive operations and may only be replaceable at great cost and with much delay. These records, including those that become inactive, should be responsibly and effectively managed and preserved. Some examples of these records are invoices, received accounts, sales records, quotations, financial statements and others identified by the parent organisation.

2.2.3.1.3 Useful records

Useful records are those records that are required for a short-term usage. Organisations may consider their disposal when they are no longer required for administrative purposes. Governmental bodies may only consider their disposal once they have obtained a written disposal authority from the National Archivist. Some examples of these records are memorandums and bank statements.
2.2.3.1.4 Non-essential records

These records include routine enquiries announcements, acknowledgements and draft notes from telephone conversation. These records essentially have a temporary value and may be destroyed after a short period.

However, again, governmental bodies may only destroy these records once written disposal authority has been obtained from the National Archivist. Wright (1999: 57-62) adds that records may also have other values and many of these will long exceed the purpose for which they were originally created or received. Records can also be used to keep the government accountable for its actions and are a reflection of the country’s democratic principles enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

2.3 RECORDS SURVEY

According to Benedon (1969: 13), a record survey is a complete listing of file contents by category together with sufficient supporting information to enable a proper evaluation of file function and activity. A record survey is a systematic exercise to locate and identify all the records held by a particular organisation. The record survey will include information pertaining to the quantity, type, function and activity of records series (APP 301 Unit 5:4).

2.3.1 Quantity

Quantity will provide an indication of the volume of the (number) of files in one record series and also how thick these files are.

2.3.2 Type

This refers to the category of information (minutes, reports, correspondence) as well as the format (paper, microfilm, CDs, maps and photographs) of the record (APP 301 Unit 5: 4).

2.3.3 Function

This indicates what the function of the records is in the organisation (vital records, record copy or non-essential records (APP 301 Unit 5: 4).
2.3.4 Activity

This gives an indication of when the records were last used and how regularly new records are added to the files. Based on the information collected during the record survey, the records manager will be able to make decisions relating to the management of the records (records retention schedule, vital records programme, or new filing system). When a couple of files are grouped together with a common theme, they are known as records series (APP 301 Unit 5: 6).

2.4 CATEGORIES OF RECORDS

2.4.1 Correspondence systems

The Records Management Policy Manual (2004: vii) defines a correspondence system as a set of paper-based and electronic communications sent, received, generated, processed and stored during the conduct of business.

2.4.2 Filing system/ File plan

A file plan is a numbering system by which documentation is classified and stored for ease of access and efficient disposal. The importance of a file plan lies in the fact that it is a plan by means of which correspondence is kept in such a way that an office’s requirements regarding the identification, arrangement, storage and retrieval of information and disposal of records can be served best (Technikon South Africa, APP 301, 2000: 39). The compilation and maintenance of a functional file plan is necessary for the efficient administration of any business. It is essential to retrieve the required information in the shortest possible time and also to have the complete information at hand (Bearman, 1993:17). Filing is the systematic arrangement of documentation to facilitate easy retrieval.

2.5 ELEMENTS OF A SOUND RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

2.5.1 Records Management Policy

According to the National Archives and Records Services Act 43 of 1996 (NARS), an organisation keeps resources to support its operations and fulfil legal and other commitments
and responsibilities. The organisation should manage information resources according to the broad policy guidelines contained in the National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of South Africa, 1996 sec 13(4). It is crucial for each organisation to establish its own records management policy in order to connect its own unique processes and procedures to the requirements of the National Archives. The policy should be in line with the Act and complement the organisation’s overall mandate and mission objectives. A records management policy should be flexible, user-friendly and cost-effective. Review of policy should be done once a year (National Archives and Records Services, 2004: 65-68).

2.5.2 Records management procedure manual

The Procedure Manual of the Amathole District Municipality (2007:1), describes all registry and records management procedures that need to be followed. It should be compiled in such a manner that it can be used for training purposes within the particular office. It should further provide registry personnel with an understanding of the broader approach so that they are conversant with the services of archives.

2.5.3 Records classification systems

The Records Manual Policy (2004: x) defines this as a plan for the systematic identification and arrangements of business activities or records, or both, into categories according to logically structure conventions, methods and procedural rules represented in the classification system. For government bodies, the South Africa National Archives and Records Services Act 43 of 1996 prescribe the file plan (formally known as the filing system) for correspondence systems, and the schedule for other records (formally known as the records control schedule) for other than correspondence systems.

2.5.4 Records control mechanism

This schedule enables governmental bodies to manage records other than correspondence files. The record schedule is also an indexing system in which the records are listed in a logical way according to their functions and type. The schedule indicates where the records can be located and how they should be disposed of (National Archives and Records Services Act 43 of 1996).
2.6 ADVANTAGES OF EFFECTIVE RECORDS MANAGEMENT

As defined by Bearman (1993: 17-20), records are resources which should be fully and cost-effectively utilised to meet the administrative and executive objectives of the organisation. The advantages of effective records management include the following:

- Well-organised record keeping systems enable organisations to find information easily. Records correctly filed and stored are easily accessible, facilitating transparency and accountability;
- Orderly and efficient flow of information enables organisations to perform their functions successfully and efficiently;
- Authoritative and reliable records are created and maintained in an accessible, intelligent and convenient manner to support business and accountability requirements;
- Eliminating unnecessary duplication of records ensures proficiency and document economy;
- The utilisation of an annual retention and disposal programme ensures that organisations only keep those records actually required for administrative and executive functions; and
- Organisations, which restrict access to only authorised persons prevent the information or the records themselves from being stolen, damaged or altered.

Effective records management furthermore prevents the inappropriate disclosure of information, which could harm the organisation or infringe on the privacy and confidentiality rights of individuals. Records management is a business process designed to support business objectives.

According to the World Bank (2002: 14), sound records management implies that records are managed in terms of an organisational records management programme are governed by an organisational records management policy. Moreover, in the same sense that other local governmental resources need managing, records management should be regarded as equally important as other governmental operations. The purpose is to improve public records to make the records serve the purpose for which they were created.
Effective records management considers the following four pillars of comprehensive development (World Bank, 2002: 14):

1. Good governance;
2. Equitable judicial system;
3. Accountable financial system; and
4. Enforcement civil rights.

The World Bank (2000: 3) further states that all these pillars depend on effective records management infrastructure policies and procedures. For the organisation’s development strategies to be successful, the aim should be to satisfy the interest of all the citizens and promote human dignity, security, justice and equity. For such action to be successful, the political and administrative system must be responsive and accountable. Emmerson (1989:8) argues that records management is also concerned with accountability. Nobody can demonstrate its accountability satisfactorily to its auditors, shareholders or to the public without establishing good records management procedures.

2.7 ARCHIVES

The National Archives Act 43 of 1996 defines archives as records already in the custody of an archival repository. According to the Oxford Illustrated Dictionary (1978:719), an archive is the place in which records are kept.

2.7.1 Archives repository

It is also known as repository or archival institution. This is the building in which records with archival value are preserved permanently (Records Management Policy, 2004: vii).

2.7.2 Archival value

According to the Records Management Policy (2004: vii), this refers to the long-term use records may have for purposes other than functional use. The administrative, fiscal, legal evidential and informational value will justify the indefinite retention of records.
2.7.3 Appraisal

The Records Management Policy (2004: vii) states that appraisal is the process of determining the eventual disposal of records and decision regarding the preservation requirements of each document or series of documents.

2.7.4 Case files

These are the most detailed (or specific) divisions in a file plan that create a separate file for each person, place, institution or item (Records Management Policy, 2004: vii).

2.7.5 Current records

These are records that form part of records classifications that are still in use (Records Management Policy, 2004: vii).

2.7.6 Custody

The Amathole Registry Procedure Manual (2007:2) refers to custody as the control of records based upon their physical possession.

2.7.7 Storage areas

The Records Management Policy Manual (2004: viii) defines a storage area as the area where records are kept in an organisation. Government bodies should indicate where all the case files which are listed in the series of separate case files are stored and how they are managed.

2.7.8 Paper-based correspondence files

This is information which is generally stored in a paper-based medium. Correspondence files are stored together in areas and under conditions suitable for the storage of paper. They are listed and described according to a filing system. They usually form the largest portion of records in any organisation (National Archives and Records Service Act of South Africa Act 43 of 1996).

2.7.9 Governmental body

It is any legislative, executive, judicial or administrative organ of state (including a statutory body) at the national sphere of government and, until provincial archival legislation takes
effect, also includes all provincial administrations and local authorities (The National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of 1996).

2.8 DISPOSAL PROGRAMME

It is an action involving either destroying or deleting a record or transferring into archival custody (Provincial Archives Act 7 of 2003).

2.8.1 Disposal authority

The Records Management Policy Manual (2004: vii), defines disposal authority as a written authority issued by the National or Provincial Archivist specifying which records should be destroyed or deleted or otherwise disposed of. This is only applicable to government bodies i.e. national, provincial and local government structures.

2.8.2 Disposal authority number

It is a unique number identifying each disposal authority to a specific government body (Records Management Policy Manual (2004: vii)).

2.8.3 Disposal instructions

It is a specific instrument regarding disposal allocated to each record, for example, D for delete or destroy, P for transfer into a permanent storage or A20 in the case of government bodies (Records Management Policy Manual (2004: vii)).

2.8.4 Document

Document refers to recorded information. It can only be regarded as a record if it has content, context, format and an interrelationship with other documents. If these elements are missing, it cannot be regarded as a record (Managing Electronic Records Policy Guidelines, 2003: 36).
2.9 GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Elmond (2014:15) states that the local government sphere is where service delivery primarily takes place but many municipalities in South Africa lack the necessary resources, technical and financial skills to make their presence felt. A record is one of the most important resources of an organisation. President Zuma praised 11 municipalities in the country that have distinguished themselves over the years for consistent clean audits, good performance in service delivery and their expenditure on infrastructure grants. The President stated that an inter-ministerial task team on service delivery, led by the Minister of Cooperative Governance, Pravin Godhan, would look into and find solutions that would ensure that all municipalities in the country are able to deal with their challenges and are ready to deliver effective services to the people (Mail & Guardian News (2014:15).

Shepherd (2006: 10) argues that records which are managed as part of an appropriate records management programme will help the organisation to conduct business in an efficient and accountable manner and deliver services consistently. To support this view Cox and Wallace (2002: 67) state that accountability and transparency cannot be achieved in an environment where information is not available. Kanzi (2010: 26) expresses a similar view by stating that records underpin accountability.

2.10 CENTRALISED VERSUS DECENTRALISED RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The section that follows will review the two main approaches to records management being a centralised or a decentralised records management system.

2.10.1 Centralised records management system

A centralised system is one in which the records for several people or units are located in one central location, and generally under the control of a records staff person or in the control of a records manager (http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/centrl.htm).

A centralised system is said to be a process where the concentration of decision-making is in a few hands. All the important decisions and actions at the lower level and all subjects and actions at the lower level are subject to the approval of the management
The website further states that 'centralisation' is the systematic and consistent reservation of authority at central points in the organisation. According to Heeks (1999: 4), a well-planned centralised system holds data used across the organisation in one place, allowing all staff to access it. This makes it both faster and easier to undertake organisation-wide activities. Central planning and operation also allows compatible technology and skills to be introduced. The exchange of hardware, software and staff between organisational systems and units therefore becomes much easier.

Heeks (1999: 4) argues that one main intention of centralised approaches is to have a single version of any particular information system for the whole organisation, and store any item of data once and only once. As a result, there is no wasted storage capacity and no inconsistency of data.

2.10.1.1 Advantages of centralised records management system

Heeks (1999: 5) states that a centralised system provides an organisational focus for learning and for control. This is likely to produce higher quality information systems and can also reduce costs by:

- Avoiding the decentralisation problems of inadequate security, maintenance and documentation;
- Avoiding the decentralisation problems of non-functioning or malfunctioning systems; and
- By allowing technology purchases and system developments that are not organisational priorities to be blocked.

Centralised systems allow most activities to be undertaken more cheaply per unit. Activities undertaken internally from system development to implementation and maintenance, and management of all these processes cover a greater number of staff (Heeks, 1999: 5).

Furthermore, the following additional advantages of a centralised approach are proposed:

- Responsibility is easily placed;
- There is effective use of equipment, supplies and space;
- All related data is kept together;
- Duplication is reduced;
- A uniform service is provided to all users; and
- Security is improved (http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/central.htm).

Fayol (2000: 38) adds that in a centralised organisation, decision making has been moved to tiers within the organisation, such as corporate centres. Knowledge, information and ideas are concentrated at the top and decisions are cascaded down the organisation. The span of control of top managers is relatively broad, and there are relatively many tiers in the organisation.

2.10.1.2 Strength of a centralised records management system

There are several issues to consider when setting up a records management programme. These are the “best practice” approaches and strengths to be considered:

- Philosophy or emphasis: top-down control, leadership, vision, strategy;
- Decision-making: strong authoritarian, visionary, charismatic;
- Organisational change: shaped by top, vision of leader;
- Execution: decisive, fast, coordinated. Able to respond quickly to major issues and changes; and
- Uniformity: low risk of dissent or conflicts between parts of the organisation (http://recordsmanagementstudyguide.com/centralised-decentralised.htm).

It is noted that centralised control is established through a ‘records liaison’ or ‘records manager’ who is the centralised point of contact for records management in the office and who has responsibility for maintaining the office file plan and ensuring that established procedures are followed. Examples where specific types of records are maintained in a location are:

- A centralised reference collection of documents;
- A file room for files which are inactive but which are not ready to be sent to the Archival Repository or Record Centre; and
- A public reference room for files which are accessed by the public.
2.10.1.3 Benefits of having a centralised filing location

According to the Records Management Manual (2005: Notice. 24), the following are the benefits of having a centralised filing location in an organisation:

- The file room offers the most control and security over records;
- The file room staff can make sure that access to records is limited to those who are authorised to see the records;
- The file room staff can track which files are taken from the file room, and who has them;
- Files are kept in one central location so that all employees know where to find their records;
- Duplication is reduced because a single central file is maintained, rather than multiple copies held by many employees;
- One place to go for information on the records that the department has;
- A single point of contact in the department for all records management activities;
- Greater control over the creation and distribution of information; and
- More efficient management of records. Annual or periodic tasks, such as sending records to the Records Centre, are not put off.

2.10.1.4 Requirements for a centralised system

Some organisations have a pervasive and encompassing enterprise strategy that enables them to manage information proactively so that they can plan and manage it in a reasonable and cost-effective fashion. The following are the requirements that are needed for a centralised records system:

- Enterprise-wide information analysis and strategy identifying the records in an organisation and related classification, business process and improvement, stewardship, retention, disposal, storage and archival;
- Complete management buy-in, budgeting and planning with facility to monitor metrics and update strategy on a long-term basis;
- Investments in information infrastructure, either in-house or outsourced to accommodate information; processes, retention, archival and disaster recovery;
- Adoption of a service oriented central IT policy with Service Level Agreements for departments as clients;
- Streamlining of the process for adapting to changes or new requirements in systems; and

Since most centralised departments try to find a compromise solution or balance of centralised versus decentralised, records are scattered across the various departments in a variety of systems. Having a centralised set of guidelines for information management which is issued to departments and business units providing a standard set of classification and search does help the organisation (Clarke, 2010: 3). The problem with that is the enforcement and implementation of projects within departments where the largest activity needs are included in the scope and solutions are put in place which create silos of information and multiple points of records management administration. The challenge is to find ways to meet departmental needs and view records within the organisation within a single point of records management administration (Clarke, 2010: 3).

Below is a diagramme (see Fig 2.10.1) that illustrates an example of the centralised records management system. It distinguishes between the two broad categories of records (correspondence files which are controlled by the institution’s file plan and other records other than correspondence that are controlled by records control schedule) but the bottom line is to show all kinds of records kept under one roof (centralised registry unit).
Furthermore a centralised records management system seeks to remind staff that resources are available to all staff to assist, guide and advise on all matters relating to the development and implementation of an effective recordkeeping programme (The National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of 1996).

2.10.2 Decentralised records management system

A decentralised records system is one in which the files are located throughout the office, generally at individual work stations and usually controlled by the person who creates or receives them. Decentralisation is a systematic delegation of authority of all levels of the organisation. Decisions are taken at some levels lower than the most senior, typically by individual work units within the organisation or even by individual staff members (http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/central.htm).
2.10.2.1 Constraints to decentralised systems

As discussed by Heeks (1999: 12), decentralised records management systems are also beset by problems, some of which are outlined below:

- Technical constraints, such as heavy investments in a centralised system;
- Resource constraints, such as a lack of skills to support decentralised decision-making and action on information systems; and
- Political constraints, such as the unwillingness of those at the centre to change information flows, resource flows and associated organisational power.

However, it is rare for these constraints to be completely insurmountable, partly because of the motivation of staff and individual work units to take some control (Heeks, 1999:12).

2.10.2.2 Disadvantages of a decentralised system

Heeks (1999: 12) proposes that even if the listed constraints are overcome, decentralised approaches can produce some disadvantages. Below are disadvantages that can be encountered in a decentralised system.

2.10.2.2.1 Barriers to sharing data

According to Laudon and Laudon (1995:25), a decentralised system can create information systems in different work units that are mutually incompatible. In particular, strategic, organisation-wide activities are constrained. This can lead to anything from a difficulty in aggregating basic financial information across the organisation to an inability to implement any strategic plans.

2.10.2.2.2 Barriers to sharing other resources

As proposed by Heeks (1999:13), there may also be an inability to share resources other than data if work units are allowed to set up their own separate systems. According to Oyomno (1996: 78), it may be hard to exchange hardware and software. Perhaps more importantly, each individual information system requires a unique set of skills for the system development, implementation and operation. This makes it much more difficult for staff to move between different systems. It is noted that apart from constraining what public
organisation can do, decentralised systems also tend to be very costly because units will often duplicate what others are doing (Heeks, 1999:13).

There are important issues to consider when making the decision on where records should be located within an organisation. In a decentralised system there is confusion as to where information can be found, especially if a staff member is absent. It can result in ‘fragmented’ documentation, that is, information related to the same topic or subject may be filed in multiple places. Individual staff members may not know how to maintain their files properly, and lack of uniformity (http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/central.htm).

The bottom line is to understand the recordkeeping needs of the organisation and choose the system which best fits those needs. In a decentralised system there will be a lack of records accessibility to users. A decentralised records system has a lack of uniformity on recordkeeping policies and practices. Considering a decentralised system there is a lack of compliance to produce records as evidence when required. In a decentralised records management system records may be scattered across various departments in a variety of systems. The challenge is to find a way to meet departmental needs and still enable an enterprise view of records management administration. Records need to be managed within the law and the organisation’s needs from capture (creation) to disposition (http://mikeclarkeqtility.wordpress.com/2010/07/01/records-management).

### 2.10.2.3 Decentralised filing system

The Records Management Unit (2005: 24) states that a decentralised system is not a good system for managing records. In this system, each work unit manages its records on its own. Individual work units may manage their records, but there will be significant inconsistency across the department. Usually there is also a lack of records management knowledge across the department. When problems arise, departments find that they have difficulty finding out where to get help or finding out how they should proceed to solve the problem. Consequently, problems tend to build on one another.

Furthermore, a decentralised filing location usually consists of clusters of filing, or filing cabinets in the offices. In this kind of system, offices are more likely to have problems with duplicate records being stored in filing cabinets around the office. This happens because no one knows that the information exists somewhere else. The diagramme below (see Figure
2.10.2) illustrates the decentralised records system in an organisation: the decisions are taken at some level lower than the most senior.

Figure 2.10.2: Decentralised records system in an organisation (Heeks, 1999:14)

The above diagramme illustrates a decentralised records located throughout the offices. According to the work of Heeks (1999:14), there may also be an inability to share resources other than data if work units are allowed to set up their own separate systems. Heeks (1999:3) argues that decentralised decisions are taken typically by individual work units within the organisation or even by individual staff. In addition, to analyse the diagramme, there are difficult members of the staff group who think they know about records management, are vocal in expressing their opinions, but who in practice understand little or nothing about records management systems.

Wolfe (1999:34) states that a decentralised approaches also necessarily mean limited central ability to plan and control, leading to a tendency of some decentralised systems to be developed and used without due care. The results may be a system that either never works or does not work properly.
It is noted that poor records management exposes the organisation to legal consequences, due to non-compliance with regulations on records management. There are many pieces of legislation regarding records management. They require that the person responsible put a proper record management programme in place in the organisation. It is also required of the organisation to maintain financial records for auditing purposes. Good records are directly linked to increased transparency and effective corporate governance.

2.11 DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

According to the International Records Management Trust (2000: 68), the government focus is on improving the incentive structure of the civil service, and so the need for accurate and complete records becomes more critical. For this to happen, a filing system should be located in one central point. The information is not accessible if the relevant records cannot be located. At the same time, unless there is a very well developed capacity to manage records as legally verifiable evidence of entitlement, contractual obligations, policies, or transactions for the period required, a mixed media, paper or electronic, a human resource information system is essential. Also the regular transfer of records from current to semi-current storage and the destruction of obsolete records, that is, the disposal of records, needs to be ensured (The International Records Management Trust (2000: 68).

2.12 ANTI-CORRUPTION

The International Records Management Trust (2000: 68) further states that in a decentralised filing system the loss of control of financial records creates opportunities for fraud, leads to loss of revenue, and impedes fiscal planning. It makes it difficult, if not impossible, to preserve an audit trail of decisions, actions and transactions. The consequences are particularly apparent in the procurement of good and works. Well-managed records provide controls on access to records, track the movement of records through the organisation, and provide reliable and authentic audit trails which demonstrate an unambiguous link between an authority, an individual’s actions, and a date.
Records can serve as evidence to identify abuse, misuse, and non-compliance with financial instructions and other laws and regulations. Kanzi (2010: 30) adds that without a well-managed records system anti-corruption strategies are impaired. In order to minimise corruption, government should redirect its focus to promote good records management systems and practices as one of the corruption-prevention strategies instead of pumping its resources into investigating and detecting corruption.

Kanzi (2010: 30) indicates that this would make a significant difference as there would be fewer corruption cases to investigate when records are well-managed. However, prevention is better than cure and much cheaper than prosecution. Palmer (2000: 65) states that the role of a records management system is that it acts as a control system that reinforces other systems such as internal and external auditing. The records themselves can serve to detect fraud and recover the loss. In this case, Palmer (2000: 65) further argues that, for example, discrepancies can be detected, mostly in the process of scrutinising records. Since corruption creates an environment that allows opportunities to commit fraud, once fraud is detected, records can provide a trail for investigations to track the root of corruption. However, for records to be useful in this capacity they must be well-managed, accessible and in a good location point for retrieval. These can be achieved when there are sound records management systems.

2.13 CONCLUSION

Records management is the heartbeat of any organisation. Records management in an organisation or business includes classifying, storing, securing and preserving or disposing of records. From the foregoing discussion, it can be deduced that a record shows the history of the public service and the institution’s business. Through records management practices the organisation is able to position itself in channeling the new ream of bills and laws. Only with effective records management systems will the organisation be able to understand its current state, the uneven performance of the institution and how to move beyond the consequences of a complicated past.

The above review has indicated that for an organisation to fulfill its administration efficiently and effectively, sound records management practices must be compulsory as regulated by
legislation. They should not be taken for granted but be practised by government institutions. Ignorance of records management can affect the citizens in terms of service delivery. Customer satisfaction will also be jeopardised if information cannot be accessed promptly and customer needs met. A backlog in the business operations can also result from poor records. Management decisions are made with reference to organisation records. This implies that without the proper documents, an organisation risks making unfounded decisions resulting in losses, corruption and mismanagement. A sound records management system is directly linked to increased transparency and effective corporate governance. Proper management of records ensures that information is kept under control.

In the chapter that follows the focus will be on the records management system employed by the Amathole District Municipality.
CHAPTER 3: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the records management system at the Amathole District Municipality. It will give an overview of the structure of the ADM and general procedures on records management. The study will also explore the value of the records systems and the role players in control of the records management systems.

3.2 THE OVERVIEW OF AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

In terms of Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, as amended, there are three categories of municipalities, namely; metropolitan, district and local municipalities. In the Constitution they are also referred to as categories A (metropolitan), B (local), and C (district) municipalities. The Amathole District Municipality (hereafter referred to as the ADM), on the eastern seaboard of South Africa, is a category C municipality which was established after the local government elections in December 2000. Adlem and Du Pisani (1982: 99) maintain that one of the main reasons why local government exists is to supply inhabitants’ with those services that private enterprise is either unwilling or unable to provide because the services may have to be delivered on a non-profit or break-even basis.

The Amathole District Municipality is situated in the central part of the Eastern Cape stretching from the Indian Ocean coastline in the south to the Amathole Mountains in the north, and from Mbolompo Point in the east to the Great Fish River in the west. The district lies at the heart of the Eastern Cape Province with its headquarters based in East London and is presently home to about 1.7 million people. The district has seven local municipalities namely: Amahlathi, Great Kei, Mbhashe, Mnquma, Ngqushwa, Nkonkobe and Nxuba, each containing at least one urban service centre (http://www.municipalityguide.co.za/amathole-municipality).

The ADM has seven departments, namely: Engineering Services, Community Services, Corporate Services, Land, Human Settlement and Economic Development, Budget and Treasury Office, Strategic Planning and Management and Legislative Support Services. Each department has its directorate and sections with units. Each department is engaged in the
proper management of its records since it is a cross-departmental responsibility. Important to note, however, is that Corporate Services is the custodian of records for the whole institution except for financial transactions (statements and invoices), which are kept and maintained by the Budget and Treasury Office. Tender documents remain the responsibility of the Supply Chain Management Section which is part of the Budget and Treasury Office.

The Corporate Services Department has its records units as follows:

- A Central Registry/Records Office responsible for safekeeping the institution’s records; and
- Human Resources personnel who are responsible for the security and management of the personnel files/records.

3.3 BROAD RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

In terms of the National Archives and Records Services Act 43 of 1996 each municipality has an Accounting Officer (Municipal Manager) to operate the management of its records. The Local Government Transition Second Amendment Act 97 of 1996 defines a Municipal Manager as a person who is, inter alia, responsible for accounting for all monies received by the municipality. The Municipal Manager of the ADM is responsible for the records management practices as outlined in the National Archives and Records Service Act of 1996 and which also outlines the National Regulations and the Archives Instructions.

3.4 OBJECTIVES AND VALUES OF A MUNICIPAL REGISTRY UNIT

The Water Service Authorities Commonalities Recordkeeping (2004:2) summarises the objectives of an effective municipal registry as follows:

- The physical care of documents;
- Control of access to files;
- Control over the movement of documents;
- Classification of all documentation received by the local municipality; and
- Administration of the disposal programme.
As part of the objectives of an effective municipal registry cognisance must be taken of the importance of this particular function within a local municipality. No municipality can function efficiently without an effective registry being in place. In this regard it should be noted that information held within the registry is a vital resource to the municipality.

The Water Service Authorities Commonalities Recordkeeping (2004:2) states that information provides a key element in both the internal and external communication processes. It reinforces the municipality’s legal and financial rights and obligations. It constitutes the memory of both the municipality and the local communities it serves. The discussion demonstrates that the Registry Office is of considerable value in any government body.

According to the Amathole District Municipality’s Procedure Manual (2007:6), the Registry Office is an indispensable link between the ADM and the outside world. It is also the link between the various departments within council. The Registry controls the formal channels of communication between these departments and is responsible for the orderly and efficient flow of information. The success of the council depends on the quality of this link (registry). For example, a Registry can effectively and efficiently classify information, perform tasks quickly and precisely and carry out the disposal of completed activities, retaining only those which will be of future value (ADM Procedure Manual, 2007:6). The keeping of written records ensures logical actions and renders controllable activities.

The ADM Procedure Manual (2007:6) states that Registry ensures that the council is able, logically and responsibly, to pursue its affairs and avoid possible collusion that may rebound upon its integrity. A written record therefore substantiates the legal and financial obligations of council to indemnify itself against unjustifiable demands and claims (ADM Procedure Manual, 2007:7). Records and archives are valuable sources of information, whether cultural, academic, social, economic or political. The importance of the Registry functions places a number of obligations on registry personnel.

The ADM creates and accumulate records to undertake its businesses. These records are created for the purpose, and as evidence, of official business. These records have an on-going use as a means of management, accountability, operational continuity, legal evidence and disaster recovery. They also form part of the memory of the institution that created them, and by extension, they are part of society’s memory and the broader cultural heritage. The value
of records is also supported by an article from the Daily Dispatch (2013: 2), covering the Hawks and Commercial Crime Unit’s pouncing on the Ntabankulu municipality’s offices, seizing documents connected to the alleged rigging of R16-million worth of tenders. According to Cox (2001: 31), records have a dual role: as information resource and as evidence. Furthermore, records support business activities and are indispensable as part of organisational accountability (Cox, 2001: 31).

The need for the effective management of records is enhanced by the Public Financial Management Act of 1999, the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000 and the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 2000. According to Section 13 (4) of the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act No. 43 of 1996, in order for any municipality or organisation to support continuing service delivery and provide the necessary accountability it should create and maintain authentic, reliable and usable records systems.

3.5 GENERAL PROCEDURE ON RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Chapter 2 explained the advantages of a centralised and decentralised records management system. According to a Technikon South Africa Study Manual, APP301, (2000:17), a centralised registry is one where records of common interest to all employees are placed in one location under the control of one supervisor. Registering the records includes the recording of the details of all records that enter and leave the registry. A decentralised registry is one where records created and used by one department are stored in that particular department.

Kanzi (2010:16) argues that the appropriate use of proper records management systems leads to clear administration in a municipality. This then is to ensure the orderly and efficient flow of information that enables the ADM to perform its functions successfully and efficiently. The primary purpose of this study is, therefore, to discuss the effects of a decentralised records management system in relation to the Amathole District Municipality. Attention will be paid to effective interventions that can be made to address the proper records management system in order to ensure that the provision of services to communities is carried out in an efficient and sustainable manner.
3.5.1. Requirements for centralised and decentralised systems

The increasing number of employees in an organisation has significantly changed the way that records should either be kept in a centralised or decentralised way. The change poses challenges to the organisation which must ensure that records are maintained and physically protected. It is essential for the organisation to give specific consideration to the system that suits the management of records best and will make it comply with legislative requirements.

3.5.1.1 Centralised records management system

The National Archives and Records Services endorsed the ISO 15489 International Records Management Standard as the required standard for records management which, in terms of its statutory mandate, requires organisations to put the necessary infrastructure, policies, strategies, procedures and systems in place to ensure that records in all formats are managed in an integrated manner. Centralised registry is, mostly, established to ensure uniformity of methods and to accomplish better training. It provides the interchange of personnel and ensures that personnel and accommodation are utilised to the fullest (ADM Records Procedure Manual 2007:10). The strategy (decentralised) that the ADM has in place should be addressed within the broader context of policies, standards and practices that deal with the management of all forms of recorded information.

Whichever system is chosen, all users should be aware of the practices in order to be capable of applying them consistently to all records both paper-based and electronic. Ideally, for an institution like the ADM, a centralised system might be the best choice for the local communities to provide better services that needs annual reports. In terms of Section 13 (10 of the Provincial Archives and Records Service Act No. 7 of 2003), the Provincial Archivist assumes the role of central authority over public records (Provincial Archives and Records Service Act No. 7 of 2003).

3.5.1.2 Decentralised records management system

In Chapter 2 a decentralised system is defined as a system that cannot control the records instability within the work place. According to Kanzi (2010:65), the ADM compiled a manual in 2003 in fulfilment of the requirements of the Promotion of Access to Information Act of 2000. Kanzi (2010:65) further argues that the manual details the manner in which the ADM records can be accessed, and points out a place in which such records are allocated.
The manual has never been reviewed since its adoption and implementation despite many developments that have taken place at the ADM. Kanzi (2010: 66) avers that this implies that the information contained in the manual is not a true reflection of the state of affairs at the ADM.

In addition to the definition given above a decentralised system may never be able to provide a simple set of guidelines applicable to all cases of records management functionality required by the National Archives and Records Services. It is observed that the current state of records management system at the ADM is decentralised. The existing status leads to a poor flow of information management within the departments. This system also raises difficult questions regarding a records management’s status. An organisation’s ability to function efficiently and give account of its actions could therefore be negatively affected if sound records management principles are not applied.

3.6 PRINCIPLES OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

According to the National Archives of South Africa Registry Guide (1998: 17), if the files are of such a general nature that they are used by more than one division or section, or if the various stages during the handling of a matter cause the file to move from one division or section to another, it is advisable to keep the files in a central registry. As discussed by the Guide (1998: 17), where the organisation has decided to use a decentralised management of records, the following requirements must be laid down:

- The receipt and opening of correspondence or mail remain the function of the main or central registry;
- All outgoing letters, should be put into envelopes by the central or main registry and dispatched by it;
- The filing system and other methods of handling and taking care of documents and files should remain uniform. No departures from this may take place without consultation with the Records Manager; and
- Personnel should be trained in the main Registry.

As discussed in Chapter 2 it is necessary that each organisation must have a sound records management system that will provide the proper management and care of records.
In each financial year the ADM has to furnish the Auditor-General with the required information to ensure the management of the budget. This exercise sometimes becomes difficult as the information is in different sub-registries, official offices or departmental strong rooms. For example, original tender documents are kept in the Supply Chain Management Unit and the main registry keeps copies of such documents. Some documents never reach the main registry and when these cannot be found the registry staff should try and get the authors of those documents. Old documents are kept at the other site of the organisation.

The National Archives of South Africa Registry Guide (1998: 16) states that where a registry is centralised it is more advantageous for files to be nearer and readily available so that delays in obtaining them are eliminated. In terms of the National Archives, Directives C1 (1998: 100), officials do not always realise that records are the property of the institution where they are created and received. These records are not the property of the officials who created or received them in their capacity as employees. Hence, employees do not have authority to dispose of records at will. Sound records management principles help organisations to file records in order to enable them to easily retrieve them when they are needed (Managing Electronic Records Policy Guidelines, 2003:7).

From the above discussion, it is evident that records should be placed or stored under controlled conditions. According to the National Archives, Directive C1 (1998:17), it is advisable to keep files in a central registry to improve security and control. Inadequate records management systems affect the flow of information and programme delivery. Kanzi (2010: 26) concurs with this statement by stating that recordkeeping systems are vital in the strategic planning processes of an organisation. Kanzi (2010:27) further indicates that the successful planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Integrated Development Plan in a municipality depends on the availability of information and well kept records.

3.7 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RECORDS MANAGER

According to Kanzi (2010:45), the Director: Corporate Services has delegated authority from the Municipal Manager to ensure the effective and efficient management of the ADM’s
Kanzi (2010:45) argues that the Director manages the performance of the Records Manager. As discussed by Emmerson (1989:17), the Records Manager plays an important role in the development, implementation and maintenance of a records management programme. It is crucial for the Records Manager to have a good understanding of the way records are created, knowledge of the development of recordkeeping systems for the provision of information, knowledge of available technology for the management of records, as well as confidence and authority to communicate with all levels of management. Emmerson (1989:17) argues that the Records Manager must be able to plan comprehensively and adapt systems, policies and procedures to satisfy operational requirements.

The Records Manager should be an experienced practitioner and this is not a position that should be given to an inexperienced, first time appointee. According to the National Archives and Records Service in section 13 (5), the position of the Records Manager is of a supervisory and managerial nature. The practical work connected to his or her responsibilities may be delegated to subordinates, such as the Registry Head. However, the Records Manager’s responsibility is to ensure that the organisational records management practices comply with the requirements of the Act and may not be delegated. The Records Manager must draft an organisational records management policy. The immediate objective of the policy is the creation and management of authentic, reliable and usable records, capable of supporting the business functions of the body.

The Records Manager should ensure that the policy is adopted and endorsed by the head of the organisation as well as his or her top management team and that the policy is communicated and implemented throughout the organisation. It is the duty of the Records Manager to work hand in hand with the Senior Managers, as well as the Information Technology (IT) Manager for electronic records management to ensure that records generated, stored and processed in electronic systems are managed. Therefore, the management of electronic records should be not left solely to the IT Manager because IT management and management of records existing in IT systems are different disciplines. To ensure that information contained in records is kept in a safe and secure environment, the Records Manager should also work closely with the organisation’s security manager to ensure that all records storage areas comply with the National Intelligence Agency’s prescribed security measures (http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2001/infosecure.pdf).
According to Kelly (2005: 20-23), the Records Manager has to make sure that the organisation has recordkeeping systems that have been approved by the National Archivist. In terms of the Performance Criteria for Records Managers of Government Bodies (2003: 4), the Records Manager has to determine what the current recordkeeping system and records management situation are in that particular organisation. The Records Manager is responsible for ensuring that relevant information is available regarding the recordkeeping and records management systems of the office. Kelly (2005: 24) stipulates these specific performance outcomes on the part of a records manager as follows:

- Analyse the requirements of good governance and relate them to the objectives of the office;
- Relate good recordkeeping and good records management systems to the objectives of the office;
- Secure top management’s buy-in into good recordkeeping and records management practices;
- Ensure that good recordkeeping and good records management are added to the broader information management strategy and strategic plan; and
- Ensure adequate storage accommodation is provided for the records.

### 3.8 THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AT THE AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

It is important for an organisation to adhere to the laws and regulations that are formulated and endorsed by management to regulate its functioning. According to Kanzi (2010: 28), a well designed records management system helps protect an organisation legally. The poor state of records management systems has proved to be a hindrance to prosecution of corruption offences due to a lack of tangible evidence in the form of documents (Kanzi, 2010:28). In addition, organisations lose a lot of money to unscrupulous contracts or tenders due to service level agreements that cannot be tracked from organisations’ records systems. It should be noted that a Records Management Unit in a particular organisation will always be responsible for promoting effective, efficient and accountable control over records systems.
of that particular organisation. Such a Unit is also responsible through the inspection of records systems and other methods, for making sure that the organisation complies with the provisions of the Act and other relevant legislations (National Archives Instructions, 2000: 4).

It is stated in Chapter 2 that bad records management results in spending too much time in locating misplaced files. As previously mentioned the state of records management at the ADM is mostly maintained in a decentralised system. It should be noted that a bad records management system can easily negatively influence an organisation’s capacity to have a credible information system. The ADM has an approved Procedure Manual but it has not been reviewed and updated in recent times for it to be on par with the latest developments in the field. The review or amendment of Records Management Policy and Records Procedure Manual is crucial for any institution. The review keeps the employees updated about new practices and systems that relate to records management in general. A reviewed Records Management Policy can enable the ADM’s records management practices to be such that they ensure the proper control and custody of records. This can also have an effect of guiding the flow of information or files generated by the officials and the appropriate running of the organisation.

As a result of a good quality records management system, the ADM can access information promptly and meet customer needs. According to Ambira (2011: 9), central controls of records management minimise the risk management of records. Ambira (2011: 9) states that the central point in records management will always be the Information Technology division, in conjunction with operations division, which together should automate the file tracking system with ease. This will reduce time-consuming effort to retrieve files scattered in different records stations or departments. In the ADM, records are kept in different sub-registries, offsite, officials’ cabinets and the department strong room storages. Other records are in private offsite storages and are not listed properly as required by the National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of 1996.

The ADM central registry is the central point for dispatching and receiving incoming and outgoing mail for the institution (ADM Records Procedure Manual, 2003: 5). Officials receive and respond to mail without sending anything to be registered at the main registry. The ADM has an approved filing system but it is rarely used by records users. It is common
knowledge that records are part of this institution’s resources, but departments do not keep files for faxes sent or received. This then makes it difficult to track whether correspondence was sent by mail or fax machine. It is the responsibility of staff to allocate reference numbers to correspondence according to the approved ADM file plan and forward the copies of these to a central registry. These records only find their way to the central or main registry when officials in those departments terminate their services with the Council. The effect of this gross and blatant non-compliance results in staff in the Registry Office sitting with a backlog of filing. In terms of National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of 1996 a registry should be centrally located for easy access of information.

The ADM has to state clearly in an approved Records Management Policy and Records Procedure Manual whether the system of records management should be centralised or decentralised. Heeks (1999: 4) states that one main intention of a centralised approach is to have a single version of any particular information system for the whole organisation. To have a single version is a challenge to the ADM. Kanzi (2010: 49) argues that the office space challenges the ADM’s records management systems. This implies that the Registry Office, although it is purported to be not centrally located, will always struggle to accommodate the records for the whole institution.

The positive spin-off of a centralised version is an organisation’s ability to keep a tight grip on all aspects of the business. With such a tight grip of records management in all aspects of an organisation, it goes without saying that there is less chance that employees will be unaware of what is expected and what the common goals are.

During the time of conducting this study, the ADM’s old records (dating back to 1932), has not yet been disposed of. According to Kanzi (2010: 54), the documents should have been disposed of in terms of legislative requirements. In September 2013, the ADM received the disposal authority and the records staff are in the process of separating files to be archived from those files that need to be destroyed by the Provincial Archives (Internal Audit Report 2014:27).
3.9 LEGAL PERSPECTIVE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Records or registry offices are legislated in terms of the National Archives and Records Services of South Africa Act 43 of 1996 in line with the spirit of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996.

3.9.1 Access to records

Since one of the objectives of the National Archives and Records Services is to preserve public records with enduring value for use by the state of a registry office of any institution should adhere to the following pieces of legislation:

3.9.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996;
3.9.1.2 The National Archives and Records Services Act 43 of 1996;
3.9.1.3 The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000;
3.9.1.4 The Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000; and
3.9.1.5 The Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999.

According to Kanzi (2010: 28), records are one of the basic litigation support tools without which there can be no successful litigation as they provide information from which evidence is derived and on which decisions are made. Both officials and members of the public have regulated or limited access to the records of an organisation. For officials it can be for ordinary information-seeking purposes, academic purposes or the performance of their duties. For members of the public any such access to records is subject to the permission of the head of the office. The National Archives of South Africa Act permits access to certain records, for example the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 (National Archives, Archives Instructions, 1999: 6).

Ambira (2011:9) states that any training of personnel on the centralised records management system is investing in important and technical skills for records management. Centralisation enforces internal control and professional records management standards.

This part of the analysis seeks to highlight the fact that to ensure proper access to records in an office the Records Management Unit must ensure adherence to all pieces of legislation which have an impact on records management. This section is also not intended to be a
comprehensive analysis but merely to highlight the importance of and the need for a centralised records management system in an organisation.

3.9.1.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996

Section 32 (1)(a) and (b) states that everyone has the right of access to any information held by the state or held by another person when that information is required for the exercise or protection of any right. Section 41(1) (c) provides that all spheres of government and all organs of state must provide effective, transparent, accountable and coherent government for the Republic as a whole.

The Amathole District Municipality complies with Section 195 (1)(f) which requires the organisation to grant access to the Office of the Auditor-General to information on the financial transactions entered into in order to give account to tax payers. The ADM is one of the municipalities that received an unqualified report from the Office of the Auditor-General for the 2012/2013 financial year. Though the ADM is rated as the best among other district municipalities in the Eastern Cape its staff should still be trained and equipped with the necessary skills to enable them to understand the importance of properly keeping Council records. Kanzi (2010: 22), in support of the above statement, expresses the view that the Records Manager should ensure that all staff members of an institution are conversant with proper registry procedures. If the latter statement can be applied to the ADM, staff can be satisfactorily aware that records are also the Council resources that need to be carefully and scrupulously looked after as mentioned earlier in this discussion.

3.9.1.2 The National Archives and Records Services Act (NARS) 43 of 1996

The ADM, as does any organisation, creates and accumulate records in the undertaking of its business. These records have on-going use as a means of management, accountability, operational continuity, legal evidence and disaster recovery. The need for the effective management of records is enhanced by the NARS. The purpose of this particular Act is the following:

- To determine which recordkeeping system should be used by government bodies;
- To authorise the disposal of public records or their transfer into archival custody;
- To determine conditions to which records may be electronically reproduced; and
To determine the electronic records system, which should be used to manage institutional records.

It should be noted that the Act prohibits the removal of files by unauthorised persons (Kanzi, 2010: 30).

**3.9.1.3 The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000**

The intention of this piece of legislation is to guarantee that administrative action is lawful, responsible and accurately documented.

**3.9.1.4 Promotion of Access to Information (PAIA) No.2 of 2000**

Section 14 (1) (1) to (4) and 51 (1) to (4) of the Promotion of Access to Information Act No.2 of 2000 gives the right to everyone to have access to information held by the public and private bodies. Organisations, especially government departments, must compile a manual containing detailed information about a particular office and the list of records available in an organisation. This manual must be updated on a regular basis and be made available when requested. The Amathole District Municipality compiled the manual as a fulfilment of the PAIA. According to the study by Kanzi (2010: 65), the manual was compiled in 2003 giving information about which the ADM records can be accessed, and places where such records can be found. Kanzi (2010: 65) states that the manual also provides the names and details of the Information Officer and the Deputy Information Officer. However, Kanzi (2010:65) divulges the fact that the manual has never been reviewed since its adoption and implementation despite the many developments that have taken place at ADM. The organisation has since been restructured and both the Information Officer and the Deputy Information Officer left the institution (Kanzi, 2010: 66). Such positions were no created even to the 2014 new organogram.

During the time of conducting this study, no efforts were made to review and amend the ADM’s Promotion of Access to Information Manual. As discussed by Kanzi (2010: 66), the Records Office staff and ADM staff in general were never workshoped on the manual and consequently certain staff members are not aware of its existence and its contents. This has resulted in the not too distant past in instances where staff members availed information to the public unaware that they are not supposed to do so (Kanzi, 2010: 66). The ADM staff continue to disclose information that can harm the organisations’ rights. Section 32 of the
Constitution (1996) states that whereas there are rights of access to information, there is also a right for an institution to refuse and restrict access to private and classified documents.

### 3.9.1.5 The Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999 (PFMA)

The ADM performs its functions in compliance with the PFMA, specifically with regards to the financial recordkeeping system. The Budget and Treasury Office is the custodian of the ADM’s financial management system. The objective of this Act is to secure transparency, accountability and sound management of revenue, expenditure, assets and liabilities by departments, public entities and constitutional institutions. Departments responsible for the generation of General Annual Reports, the Annual Budget and the Integrated Development Plans delay to submit the said documents to the Registry for safekeeping except on request.

The Records Manager has to request these documents as they are also part of public records. The Supply Chain Management Section (SCM), as an integral part of the BTO, maintains a sub-registry of its own which is separate from the central registry of the ADM. The SCM is the section where procurement of goods and services occurs. The bidding for tenders which is the most crucial part in an organisation is managed at the SCM. The separate keeping of the SCM documents seems to be a problem at the ADM. According to the National Archives and Records Services Act 43 of 1996, original documents should be kept at the main registry of an organisation. At the ADM, the SCM sends copies of those documents for filing.

Kanzi (2010:68) states that good records management underpins transparency and may assist the municipality in cases of disputes arising from the bidding processes. A person who has not been trained in the management of records cannot be expected to efficiently manage record keeping in an institution. This leads to untraceable records and loss of an institution’s information (Internal Audit Report, 2014:8).

The challenge is that when the officials are not sure about the whereabouts of the documents, they go and look for them at the main registry. The unfortunate part of this process in the case of the SCM is that the main registry keeps the copies of the tender documents.

The purpose of a records centre is to house records and make them available for use (when necessary) until their (documents’) disposal date. These disposal instructions are contained in the retention schedule (Duchein, 1988: 127).
3.9.2 Vaults and safes

In some instances the most valuable and confidential records are stored in the safes or vaults that have been specially built to offer maximum protection. These vaults are usually installed in the basement of the building and have walls, floors and ceilings of reinforced concrete and doors fitted with security locks. Because they are enclosed, they must be provided with permanent ventilation and air-conditioning (Duchein, 1988: 59).

The ADM follows this procedure of safekeeping confidential and most valuable records in safes at the central registry. As the case may be, no one knows the volume of the most valuable or confidential documents that are not kept in safety since the ADM is partly decentralised. The non-uniformity in the document management system may negatively affect the organisation by the loss of valuable documents. The Internal Audit Report on Records Management Review (2014:14), states that the filing system within the ADM is not centralised, as departments keep their own filing and copies. The copies of files are not submitted to the Records Management Unit. According to the findings of the Internal Audit (2014:8), there was never an awareness workshop to educate staff members of their obligations.

3.9.3 Area for processing records

Receiving transfers of documents is one of the main tasks of a records centre. The transfer lists that should accompany the records are checked in the main registry centre (Duchein, 1988: 62). It is the responsibility of the Records Manager to ensure the retention period of records. At the ADM the challenge is that some records are scattered in different sub-registries and throughout the institution’s offices. It is common knowledge that to take control of records in this kind of a decentralised environment is challenging. Sometimes the staff show a lack of knowledge as they do not regard themselves as part of records management practices. Inappropriate storage conditions have inherent identified risks such as loss of irrecoverable information and financial resources in instances of lawsuits (ADM Internal Audit Report, 2014:9).
3.9.4 Security of records

The records should be securely protected. It should be emphasised that records are important resources of an organisation. In this regard there is no guarantee that those records in decentralised centres are properly secured.

3.9.4.1 Custodial security

Unauthorised access to the records centre must not be possible. A high level of security in the record centre must be maintained at all times in otherwise clients may lose confidence in the records and archives programme. The ADM’s central or main registry has controls and conforms to general standards set for confidential and secret records. The ADM Internal Audit Report on Records Management (2014:8) confirmed the above statement.

3.9.4.2 Environmental security

Records should be protected against possible damage by fire, flood or natural disasters. Intruder alarms and, smoke detectors should be installed and connected to the police or fire brigade. The ADM’s central registry keeps records in bulk filers which are waterproofed and fire resistant. Files that are kept throughout the offices, in various departments’ strong rooms and sub-registries have limited protection against possible damage that can occur. It is noted in the Internal Audit Report (2014: 23) that files are stored inappropriately and that the office has potential hazards that could lead to both health and fire risks.

3.9.4.3 Access to records in the office

Records may only be issued to the office that transferred them. Only authorised staff members from such an office may consult the records under supervised conditions. The request for access by other persons is referred to the head of archives and records programme, who will in turn seek authorisation from the office in question (Roper & Millar, 1999:11).

Access to records is crucial at the ADM. There are registers to be signed when issuing any kind of a record, whether case files or lease agreements. The official requesting the record has to write her/his surname, date and sign when taking and returning the document. The officials are requested not to keep the files more than three days. Officials who are designated to monitor pending files do follow-ups weekly. This practice ensures that files are in safe custody and well controlled. Kanzi (2010: 57) states that many officials undermine the
records management functions and they do not recognise the fundamental role played by the main registry to effectively manage records and fulfil the ADM’s mandate.

Despite the efforts made by the Records Management Unit, staff continue to act in transgression of the NARS Act by not handling documents properly (Kanzi, 2010:57). While records management is in the main the responsibility of users and records managers, every other manager across the spectrum must have an equal share in efficiently managing documents to sustain the ADM’s competitive advantage and ensure continuity in service delivery. The File Movement Register will be attached as Annexure A to show how the ADM exercises control over the internal movement of records.

3.9.4.4 Cleanliness and order in the records area

It is the duty of the ADM to ensure areas where records are kept are clean thus conforming to the procedures and methods of records management as entailed in the NARS. Furthermore, to avoid the risk of poor records management, the ADM staff should forward documents to the registry for filing. The Records Centre must be kept clean and records protected against perils such as dirt, insects, rodents and the growth of mould. Eating where records are kept is prohibited. The ADM lacks enough accommodation and this leads to registry staff sharing the office with records. In the central registry officials share a very limited space with files (Internal Audit Report, 2014: 23).

In terms of the NARS, records should be stored in an orderly manner and clearly marked so that records may be retrieved with minimum delay. The ADM has an approved file plan to be able to retrieve the files easily and allocate reference numbers to case files and other documents.

It must be stated in this discussion that records that are in the officials’ offices are part of the filing system of the organisation. Staffers must always be encouraged to follow proper procedures when taking and returning records.

3.9.4.5 Efficiency and economy

The ADM’s filing system was developed in terms of the NARS to retrieve records easily and quickly when required. Records which have reached the disposal date are sorted but the ADM always fails to dispose them. At the time of the study the process of disposal was in
progress. It takes a long time for the ADM to receive the disposal authority from the Provincial Archivist.

Space to accommodate files is a challenge at the ADM. Building a high tech registry with adequate space can yield low-cost storage benefits and ensure that the ADM realises the economic benefits of a records centre. Certain formats of records such as videos, magnetic tapes and other forms should be stored under specially controlled conditions which can be more effectively achieved in a records management centre than in an office (Roper & Millar, 1999: 11).

3.10 ROLE PLAYERS AND BEST PRACTICES IN CONTROL OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Records management in the Amathole District Municipality involves the participation of the ADM staff or institution as a whole in the management of records. For example, the Records Manager, IT Manager, Directors, Senior Managers and users must all participate. Records management is the key functional area of Corporate Services. Therefore the Corporate Services Directorate as a custodian of records has a responsibility to spell out the intentions and objectives of records systems as required by the NARS Act.

The top management is generally not aware that records management is a cross-departmental function in an organisation. In many cases top management only becomes aware of the importance of a record management programme after a disaster has occurred and records are destroyed and no longer available (APP301 Unit 5:15). It is therefore essential for the ADM staff to be trained on records management. The benefit to be derived from involving the participants will be that the individuals will have a good understanding of whether records management systems should be centralised or decentralised.

Bearman (1994: 107) states that Records Managers need to educate their potential partners about the value of recordkeeping and demonstrate what their contribution can be to the overall records management of the organisation.

The involvement of these role players will encourage officials to co-operate and take records management very seriously. According to Schellenberg (1956: 39), good recordkeeping is
fundamental to good business. Records should be managed as an asset rather than a liability. Schellenberg (1956: 39) expresses the view that “the efficient management of public records is of major importance to government, and a government’s efficiency can often be measured by efficiency with which its records are managed”.

3.10.1 ROLE PLAYERS

The sub-sections below discuss further the role of these partners in the management of proper records systems.

3.10.1.1 Records Manager

The role of the Records Manager has already been discussed in this chapter. The study also highlighted responsibilities of a Records Manager as promoting the effective, efficient and accountable management of the organisation’s records and ensuring, by inspections and other means, compliance of the organisation with the Act and other relevant legislations (National Archives and Records Services Act 43 of 1996 sec 13 (5)). The ADM appointed a designated Records Manager in 2010 to accomplish the objectives of records management which, amongst other, is to ensure available record-keeping systems and centralisation of the ADM’s records.

3.10.1.2 Information Technology (IT Manager)

The ADM has both paper-based and electronic records management systems. The IT Manager offers support by generating and storing information in electronic records. The IT system is set in terms of the requirement outlined in Managing Electronic Records in Governmental Bodies: Policy Principles and Requirements (2003: 30). The electronic system assists the users in database management, tracking files or documents and managing workflow. The ADM revived Documentum in 2010 which was an electronic system that supported the business functions of the institution. The system was used by certain individuals but could not be continued for long as most officials preferred the paper-based system to Documentum. Kanzi (2010: 62) states that planning for records management should be done at the strategic level and the ADM’s management must ensure that the plans are cascaded down to all the levels of employees. This will ensure that no system fails.
3.10.1.3 Directors

Directors are responsible for implementation of the records management policy in their respective departments. According to the Amathole District Municipality Records Management Policy, (2014: 3), their involvement in records management system, can enables the employees to perform their functions successfully and efficient in the organisation. At the ADM, this practice can also assist the Records Manager to put records management system in its bigger context and articulate the value it will contribute to organisational objectives. Again, comparing this statement with the ADM, it seems that only the Corporate Service Director involved in records management whereas records is a core resource for all departments. For this action to be successful, political and administrative systems must be responsive to establish an integrated records and archives management system (Roper and Millar, 1999: 7-10).

3.10.1.4 Senior Managers

Senior Managers as role players in records management system have a responsibility to advise on accurate records systems. According to Kanzi (2010:62), the role of Senior Managers is of importance in records management especially at the ADM. They should give their full support to the officials responsible for records management. The involvement of Senior Managers will assist the departments to make decisions on the records management system and ensure that records management receives the attention it deserves. They should also ensure that they budget for the records management function and that the necessary financial, human and technological resources are allocated. Senior Managers can use their influence to ensure the availability of adequate financial resources for the acquisition of the best management system.

3.10.1.5 Users

The ADM officials are the main users of the organisation’s records and therefore have a responsibility to handle them with care. They are the protectors of this very valuable property and resource of the ADM. Literature reviewed on Records Management emphasises the concept of records as the property of any institution or government body. Records management challenges impact negatively on the business objectives of an organisation. According to the ADM’s Records Management Policy Manual (2007: i), the officials who are
keeping records in their own offices are not using the approved file plan. They are either piling the records up in their offices or are compiling and using their own personal file plans. Flowing from this there is no central control over the records and it is difficult to determine whether records have been created in the first place. This renders it difficult to pinpoint which documents are authentic official records and which are not.

The ADM conducts a monthly induction of newly appointed staff so that the new appointees understand the policies of the organisation. Each department is represented in the Records Management Committee to ensure that the staff is aware of records management practices. However, it has been observed that the departmental representatives do not go back and report to their departments and ensure that their respective departmental officials implement what has been decided upon at the committee’s meetings. This observation is true if one looks at the degree of non-conformity to the records management prescripts within the organisation. This non-conformity evidences itself in the sometimes unauthorised disposal of old records by staff in the departments. This tendency creates the risk that the ADM could be held legally liable when information is requested in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000 and it is not available. Full co-operation of users is necessary to forward documents to the registry for filing purposes. All users should protect records against loss and damage (ADM Records Management Policy, 2003:5).

3.10.2 BEST PRACTICES

In most government bodies many public officials as document creators do not take precaution and make sure that documents are properly taken care of. The same applies to the ADM officials. The ADM needs to have a prudent and practical way of ensuring that there is a well structured mechanism of maintaining the relationship between the originator of the document management system and the ADM which ultimately will remain with the responsibility of managing the institution’s corporate memory.

The following are the best tools that cover the proper management of records system:
3.10.2.1 Records Management Policy

As one of the planning tools of the institution in terms of its role in records management practice, the Records Management Policy aims at ensuring, orientating and focusing at the municipality’s vision and mission. According to the findings of the Internal Audit Report (2014:10), the policy was last updated in the 2009/2010 financial year as the council minutes dated 26 March 2010 also reflect. It is the responsibility of the Records Manager to see to it that the policy is reviewed, updated and approved by Council on annual basis. It is only recently in this financial year 2014/15 that the Records Management Policy has been reviewed and approved by council (ADM Council minutes, 2014: 456). Management should ensure that the records management policy is reviewed and updated by the relevant structure on annual basis as stipulated in the National Archives Instruction Guide. Generally managers have the responsibility to continuously monitor and review policies to ensure that policies remain relevant to possible changes in the operation environment of the ADM.

3.10.2.2 Records Management Procedures

The Registry Procedure Manual describes all registry and records management procedures in detail and is compiled in such a manner that it is used for training purposes, that is, as a training manual (Records Procedure Manual, 2007:1). Records management procedures are recognised as an integral part of a responsible tool aligned to the principle of good corporate affairs and the management of records at the ADM. As such, an effective records management system is imperative to the ADM in order to fulfil its mandate, the service delivery expectations of the public and the performance expectations within ADM. The Internal Audit Report (2014:10), observed that the Records Management Policy and Records Procedure Manual were not reviewed on an annual basis at the ADM.

3.10.2.3 Recordkeeping Systems

The ADM recordkeeping system aims at fostering the exploitation of strengths and opportunities in the filing system in order to minimise the weaknesses and threats in the municipality concerning records system. This can be done through workshops and awareness campaigns about record keeping and management of records practices. The records keeping system makes records accessible easily and quickly and promotes their usage by public. It also assists the organisation with an efficient flow of information to perform its functions.
successfully. Therefore, it is always necessary for each staff member to allocate file reference numbers to those records they create or receive.

3.10.2.4 Records Control Mechanism

This is the mechanism which needs to be implemented and maintained by the ADM.

3.10.2.4.1 Register of files opened, which contains a description of all files that were actually opened according to the subject provisions in the filing system (Amathole District Municipality Records Management Policy, 2009:12). The ADM has the register of files opened which was developed for the first time after the 2013/14 Records Management Internal Audit. The register of files opened adheres to the Amathole District Municipality Records Management Policy.

3.10.2.4.2 Register of disposal authority, which contains copies of all disposal authorities issued by the Provincial Archives to the ADM (Amathole District Municipality Records Management Policy, 2009: 12). The Amathole District Municipality received the disposal authority from the Provincial Archives in September 2013. It was stated earlier on that the ADM has never disposed of its records which dated back to 1932. The process of disposal is currently in progress. The Records staff are in the process of separating files for archival from those that need to be destroyed (Internal Audit Report, 2014: 26).

3.10.2.4.3 Destruction register, which contains information on the year in which non-archival records are due for destruction (Amathole District Municipality Records Management, 2009: 12). It is stated that the Records staff are separating files for permanent preservation from those with a longer retention period to be transferred to storage areas. Records due for destruction will be destroyed (Internal Audit Report, 2014: 26).

3.10.2.5 Disposal Programme

Every governmental body should follow a systematic disposal programme that embraces both current and terminated records (ADM Registry Procedure Manual, 2007: 26). This programme is guided by an authorisation to dispose from the Provincial Archivist. The manual explains that the disposal authority is a written authority from Archives that is issued in terms of the article 13 (2) (a) of the Act that indicates which records have archival value and which have no or little value. Records with archival value should be transferred to an
archives repository and records with little archival value will be destroyed when the administrative use expires. It is the responsibility of the Municipal Manager to obtain such authority in respect of all public records in his/her custody. No public records can be destroyed without proper authority. An example of the Disposal Authority form will be attached as Annexure B, Destruction Certificate Annexure C, Disposal Register Annexure D and Transfer List Annexure E.

3.11 CONCLUSION

It is vital for the organisation to follow what is endorsed by legislation. It is the role of the employees to locate the required files using correct organisational procedures. The discussion emphasised that staff must give confidential records only to authorised people and respect confidentiality according to the organisational procedures and policy. The responsibility of the organisation is to create a record-keeping system, ensuring that it is cost-effective, practical and user-friendly. It is also important to update the recordkeeping system to be in line with the latest developments in the organisation or needs of the employees, or both. The study also emphasised that the ADM has to decide whether it wants to be a centralised or a decentralised records management system. It also highlighted the role players and the best practices in place for the proper management of records.

In the chapter that follows the research methodology adopted for this study, is discussed.
CHAPTER 4: THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SURVEY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As reflected in the previous chapter, a centralised system plays a major role in proper records management practices. It is therefore imperative for officials involved in records management to take note of the threats posed by the decentralised records management system at the Amathole District Municipality (ADM). The ADM employees need to take responsibility and make sure that a record still has a role to play in the organisation’s daily operations. Proper systems strengthen the institution’s achievements and performance.

The purpose of this chapter is to determine interventions to overcome the threats posed by the current or existing decentralised records management system at the ADM. Having addressed the disadvantages of a decentralised records management system, it remains the objective of this study to conduct records awareness and train records users in proper records management. The fundamental reason is to indicate the extent to which a centralised records system can bring about an improvement in the proper management of records at the ADM.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Creswell (2005: 37) indicates that methodology includes a collection of theories, concepts or ideas, a comparative study of different approaches and a critique of the individual methods. Mouton (2001: 56) points out that the research methodology focuses on the research process and procedures, the point of departure being the specific tasks (data collection or sampling) at hand. In this study the researcher preferred to use a quantitative approach. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 101), quantitative research is used to answer questions about relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting and controlling phenomena. Furthermore, quantitative research is more focused and aims to test assumptions. Quantitative data may lead to the measurement of other kinds of analysis involving applied mathematics (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 50-56).

Quantitative research is largely empirical or experimental and, as the name suggests, is based on measurements of quantity or amount (Spofana, 2011: 3). Creswell (1994: 2) defines a
quantitative study as “an inquiry into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed well-designed questionnaires or instruments”.

Henning (2004: 1) states that if one wants to look into social reality, using a prepared questionnaire with specific items to which people must respond by choosing a predetermined set of scaled responses, the study is known as quantitative. According to Bless, Higson-Smith and Kagee (2007: 44), quantitative research relies primarily upon measurements and uses various scales. In this study, the quantitative data is presented in tabular form as well as by means of graphs with the support of figures. Since the purpose of the study is the assessment of the records management systems, the researcher decided to obtain excellence statistics as records is a decision-making instrument for most departments at the ADM.

4.2.1 Empirical Survey

The empirical survey was conducted by way of self-administered questionnaires. For the purposes of this study, an empirical survey of a quantitative nature was used to explore the research aims and objectives. According to Treece and Treece (1977: 149), a survey is a non-experimental type of research in which the researcher investigates a community or a group of people. This may be done by asking questions, by interviewing, by observing what people are doing, by telephone interviews, as well as by other techniques. It is also considered an exploratory technique of a learning process for setting up a larger research study.

As discussed by Polit and Hungler (1983: 189), a survey is any research activity in which the investigator gathers data from a portion of a population for the purpose of examining the characteristics, opinions or intentions of that population. According to McNeil (1990: 19), a survey is a method of obtaining a large amount of data, usually in a statistical form, from a large number of people in a relatively short period of time. The empirical survey formed part of the findings and recommendations emanating from the study.

4.2.2 The survey technique (Questionnaire)

A questionnaire was used as the tool for data collection. It was compiled in such a way that it met the aims and objectives of the study. The purpose was to gather information about employees’ attitudes and thoughts concerning the records management system at the ADM. Brink (1996: 154) defines a questionnaire as a self-report instrument where the respondents
write their answers to printed questions on a document. A well-designed questionnaire is easy for the respondents to fill in, and is easy for the researcher to administer and score. Neuman (2011: 337) adds that a questionnaire is the cheapest technique and can be conducted by a single researcher. In this regard, one can say a questionnaire is a list of questions on a specific topic which is compiled by a researcher and on which answers or information is required.

The questionnaire should be structured in a simple format (Salkind, 2000: 138). There are three (3) sections that the respondents usually answer in a questionnaire. For purposes of this study section A: biographical data (consisted of five (5) questions), section B: list of possible statements using the Likert Rating Scale (consisted of fifteen (15) questions) and section C: comprised of brief sentences to allow the respondents to express their observations and opinions on the records management system at the ADM. The questionnaire is attached as Annexure F.

4.2.3 Sample selection

According to Brink (1996: 133), a sample consists of a selected group of elements or units from a defined population. The unit of analysis was the Amathole District Municipality. Since the primary aim of the research was to assess the records management system, the sample group comprised of selected officials from the ADM. The officials generate records in their daily activities. In this case, the researcher used purposive sampling. According to Neuman (2011: 267), purposive sampling is also known as judgemental sampling which is valuable for special situations.

Bailey (1982: 99) further states that in purposive sampling the investigator uses his or her own judgment about which respondents to choose, and picks only those who best meet the purpose of the study. For the purpose of this study the researcher focused directly on those officials who are the users and have an insight into the records management system at the ADM. Amongst the ADM population, the selection was based on senior managers, mid-managers, supervisors and administration assistants who are directly involved in the administration of the organisation. Within the chosen group, fifty (50) respondents were selected to participate in the research study.
The respondents were given the timeframe of five (5) days to complete the questionnaire. The researcher found that not all of the questionnaires had been completed on time and had to extend the deadline by an additional day. The reason that the respondents were given a short period of time was that they have their own commitments and questionnaires can get lost or they can forgot to complete the questionnaire. The ADM was also preparing to move to new premises in Chiselhurst in East London. Neuman (2006: 299) states that although the use of a self-administered questionnaire is possibly the cheapest method, a drawback is the often low rate of responses. Respondents do not always complete or return questionnaires, or a questionnaire is returned very late (Neuman, 2006: 299). In some instances the researcher had to explain and give clarity to questions via the telephone and in face-to-face explanations. However, the researcher was particularly vigilant not to influence any of the responses.

4.2.4 Anonymity

Brynard and Hannekom (2006: 1-6) explain research as a process whereby an attempt is made to obtain answers to specific questions and to solve identified problems in a systematic way with the support of verifiable facts. When conducting a survey through a questionnaire, anonymity can be assured, and this helps respondents to be open and honest in their answers (Bryard & Hannekom, 2006: 46). The same applied to this survey and respondents were assured that all information provided would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Because of this pledge the respondents were willing to provide information by way of answering the questionnaire.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this section, the interpretation of the gathered data is based on previous experience, the literature review and consolidated data from the empirical survey.

4.3.1 Response rate

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996: 226), the response rate is of particular significance when making generalisation. The response rate can be explained as the percentage of possible respondents in the sample who returned completed questionnaires in the research survey. For purposes of this study out of 50 respondents, 48 questionnaires were returned which implies a response rate of 96 per cent.
4.3.2 Identified technique costs

Brynard and Hanekom (2006: 46) explain a structured questionnaire as the researcher formulating a set of questions. The receiver of the questionnaire is not in face-to-face situation with the researcher, and answers the questions on a hard copy document. Although a large percentage of respondents over a large geographical area can be covered, it is noted that it remains expensive to provide each respondent with a copy of the questionnaire.

4.4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2006: 27-30) point out that the significance of the results should be clearly communicated to the working environment. The results revealed assumptions and feelings about the records management system at the Amathole District Municipality.

4.4.1 SECTION A: PERSONAL/BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

In this section the respondents were required to mark the applicable Box with an “X”.

**Question A1**

*Age group (in years)*

A large number of the respondents being 48 per cent were between the ages of 36 and 45 years of age; 27 per cent of the respondents were between the ages of 20 to 35 years; 21 per cent between 46-55 years old and only 4 per cent were over the age of 56.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group (in years)</th>
<th>20-35 years</th>
<th>36-45 years</th>
<th>46-55 years</th>
<th>+56 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 respondents</td>
<td>23 respondents</td>
<td>10 respondents</td>
<td>2 respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.4.1. Results of the age group of respondents.

Question A2

Gender

The survey was conducted amongst both male and female employees of the Amathole District Municipality. The majority being 67 per cent of the respondents from the ADM are females. 33 per cent of the respondents were males. This revealed that the majority of respondents are female. This result implies that in the frontline and the supervisory levels in all departments at the ADM females are predominant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A2. Gender
Figure 4.4.1. Gender of the participants.

Question A3

Highest qualification

Among the targeted group 6 per cent of the respondents indicated Standard 10 (Grade 12) as their highest qualification. A large number of respondents 42 per cent indicated a Diploma as their highest qualification, 27 per cent indicated that they have a degree as their highest qualification, 23 per cent indicated a post-graduate as their highest qualification and 2 per cent indicated other qualifications as their highest qualification. It is noted that the ADM plays a significant role in developing its employees. It is interesting to observe that only three employees indicated a Standard 10 as their highest qualification. This result reveals that the majority are interested in furthering their studies possibly to the benefit of the organisation.
Figure 4.4.1. Results of participant qualifications.

Question A4

**Job level**

Records management is everyone’s basic responsibility at the ADM. This responsibility starts from the Municipal Manager as the Accounting Officer down to the administration assistants of the municipality. It is stated in the previous chapter that records management is a cross-departmental function. The employees create and generate records throughout their business activities. The majority of respondents, namely 62 per cent, fall within the job level other (supervisors and administration assistants), 21 per cent fall within the job level of mid-manager, and 17 per cent are at the level of the senior manager.
Figure 4.4.1. Participant job levels.

Question A5

Length of service in the above job

A large number of respondents, namely 40 per cent, specified that they have between one to four years’ experience in their current position, 33 per cent have between five to nine years’ experience, 15 per cent have a year’s experience, 10 per cent possess between ten to nineteen years’ experience and 2 per cent have more than twenty years experience. These results imply that the majority of ADM officials understand the records management practices based on their length of service as employees of the organisation.
4.4.2 SECTION B: Likert Rating Scale

This section comprised of brief statements where the respondents had to mark the applicable box with an “X” using the Likert Rating Scale.

Question 1

*Amathole District Municipality (ADM) officials understand the legislative prescriptions regulating records management.*

The majority of respondents, namely 34 per cent, indicated that they understand the legislation regulating records management. 29 per cent indicated that they disagree with the statement, 27 per cent indicated they did not know and 10 per cent indicated that they strongly disagree with the statement. The study revealed that only 34 per cent employees are aware of the legislative prescriptions regulating records management at the ADM. See Figure 4.4.2. Q1.
Figure 4.4.2. Legislative prescription regulating records management.

**Question 2**

A centralised records system is more efficient compared to a decentralised system.

A large number of respondents being 55 per cent responded that they agreed that a centralised records system is preferable while 29 per cent reported that they strongly agreed with a centralised system. 10 per cent reported that they were neutral or they do not know and 6 per cent reported that they disagree with the statement. It is interesting to note that the majority of the employees prefer a centralised records system at the ADM. This result implies that a single central point for records information is the most appropriate option for the organisation.
Figure: 4.4.2. Efficiency of a centralised records system.

Question 3

All records created are captured into the appropriate records keeping system upon creation or receipt.

Of the respondents, 43 per cent agreed that they captured records, 27 per cent indicated a neutral response, 15 per cent disagreed that they were diligent about capturing records, 13 per cent strongly agreed and 2 per cent strongly disagreed that they captured records into the appropriate system on receipt. These results reflect that whereas the majority of employees understand the legislation endorsed by National Archives on records management, they fail to comply with the prescriptions.
Figure 4.4.2. Capturing of records.

Question 4

ADM should utilise a decentralised records management system.

Of the respondents 44 per cent disagreed with the statement, 29 per cent strongly disagreed, 19 per cent agreed, 4 per cent indicated that they do not know or reported a neutral response and 4 per cent reported that they strongly agree with having a decentralised system. It can be concluded from these findings that the existing records management system is not satisfactorily user-friendly regarding records practices at the ADM. The ADM has different types of records in terms of their importance. The important records include records that protect the legal, financial, property and other rights of the body, and those need to continue to be operational responsibilities under disaster conditions (Technikon South Africa, APP301, 2000:8).
Figure 4.4.2. A decentralised records management system.

Question 5

A well-planned centralised records management system holds data used across the organisation, allowing all staff to access such records.

Of the respondents 46 per cent indicated that they agree with the statement, 44 per cent indicated that they strongly agree, 6 per cent indicated a neutral response or they do not know and 2 per cent indicated that they disagree. 2 per cent indicated that they strongly disagree with the statement. The findings demonstrated that a well-planned centralised system can provide more people with access to information. It can also reduce the wasting of time. As a result of a centralised location an improved service could satisfy both external and internal clients of the Amathole District Municipality. See Figure 4.4.2.Q5 below, which illustrates the response results.
Figure 4.4.2. Results of a well-planned centralised records system

**Question 6**

*One centralised centre for information management is the most appropriate system for the ADM.*

A large number of respondents, namely 65 per cent, indicated that they agree with a centralised centre for information, 25 per cent strongly agreed, 8 per cent were neutral and 2 per cent disagreed with the statement. It is so interesting to note that the majority of respondents prefer a centralised records management system for the ADM.

Figure 4.4.2. Results of the appropriateness of one centre for information.
Question 7

Staff receive on-going training and awareness workshops relating to records management.

The majority of the respondents, namely 32 per cent, indicated that they disagreed with the above statement, 29 per cent agreed, 25 per cent were neutral, 8 per cent strongly disagreed and 6 per cent strongly agreed. The results above indicate that the ADM has not facilitated adequate capacity-building programmes for its staff members. See figure 4.4.2.Q7.

![Figure 4.4.2. Results on the training of ADM staff.](image)

Question 8

A uniform records management system should be used in all records stations at the ADM.

Of the respondents 54 per cent agreed with the statement, 42 per cent strongly agreed, 2 per cent were neutral and 2 per cent strongly disagreed. These responses imply that the uniformity of a records system is necessary so that employees can render quality services and attend to the needs of the community. A one-stop shop for information could increase the organisation’s performance and reduces risk on records management.
Question 9

ADM officials understand their role and responsibilities in terms of proper records management protocols.

A total of 48 per cent of the respondents were neutral on the above statement, 23 per cent disagreed, 17 per cent agreed, 8 per cent strongly disagreed and 4 per cent strongly agreed. The results reflect that the majority of officials are not sure about their role in the management of records. This implies that the Records Manager should ensure that ADM staff practice proper records management protocols across all departments. It should be of concern to the ADM that a high percentage of respondents were neutral regarding this statement. The municipality should conduct continuous awareness programmes on policies and procedures, not only for the records division, but for the whole institution.
Figure 4.4.2. Proper records management protocols.

Question 10

In a decentralised records management system, records are scattered across the various departments causing delays in accessing information.

A larger number of respondents being 40 per cent agreed with the statement that in a decentralised system records are scattered across various departments. 40 per cent strongly agreed, 10 per cent were neutral, 8 per cent disagreed and 2 per cent strongly disagreed. It was stated earlier that records are the most important resource of any organisation. It was further proposed that records contain information that is a valuable resource and an important business asset. The ISO 15489-1 states that a systematic approach to the management of records is essential for organisations to protect and preserve records as evidence of action. This entails that information must be readily accessible, accurate and economically provided in order to maintain a high standard in a worldwide economy that demands quality competitive products and services.
A decentralised records management system causes inconsistency across the various departments within the ADM.

Of the respondents 41 per cent agreed with the above statement, 38 per cent strongly agreed, 13 per cent were neutral, 6 per cent disagreed and 2 per cent strongly disagreed. The majority of respondents agreed that a decentralised system causes discrepancies across the various departments within the ADM. According to the National Archives of South Africa Registry Guide (1998: 3), a registry is a link between the various sections or departments within an organisation or government body. It controls the formal channels of the communication network which the organisation builds up internally and externally to perform its functions.

This indicates that the success achieved by the ADM in carrying out its functions will depend, to a considerable extent, on the records management system. In other words, the departments can efficiently classify information in a system that can satisfy the present-day demands of the organisation. Therefore, it can be concluded from the findings that a system that continually advances regular revisions and adapts to change to ensure the uniformity of methods, should be applied by the ADM departments.
Figure 4.4.2. Impact of a decentralised records management system.

Question 12

Decentralised filing locations usually have problems with duplicate records being stored in filing cabinets around the offices.

A large number of respondents, namely 39 per cent, strongly agreed with the statement, 38 per cent agreed, 15 per cent were neutral, 6 per cent disagreed and 2 per cent strongly disagreed. From these findings it is evident that there is considerable duplication of records within the ADM. According to the National Archives of South Africa Registry Guides (1998: 17), a decentralised system gives rise to dissimilar systems and uses, as well as to the duplication of files. The diagramme below (4.4.2.Q12) illustrates the response results of duplication records in a decentralised system.
Figure 4.4.2. Decentralised filing locations.

Question 13

Poor records management could expose the organisation to legal consequences due to non-compliance with regulations on records management.

Of the respondents, 56 per cent indicated that they strongly agreed with the statement above, 42 per cent agreed and 2 per cent disagreed. From the above findings it appears that the records management system at the ADM requires strengthening and support from top management to avoid risks due to the non-compliance of staff in terms of the regulations stipulated by National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of 1996. It is interesting to note, however, that the respondents were aware of the consequences for non-compliance in terms of the above-mentioned Act. Figure 4.4.2.Q13 below refers.
Figure 4.4.2. Results on poor records management systems.

Question 14

In a decentralised filing system the loss of control of financial records creates opportunities for fraud and corruption and impedes fiscal planning.

The majority of respondents, namely 51 per cent, strongly agreed with the statement, 35 per cent agreed, 8 per cent disagreed, 4 per cent were neutral and 2 per cent strongly disagreed.

The above responses imply that ADM employees are familiar with the consequences of a decentralised records management system and associated risks that could occur. From the findings of the survey, an efficient records management system is critical for the ADM. The promotion of accountability and transparency has been identified as cornerstones to viable records management practices. As indicated by a large number of respondents, namely 86 per cent, the importance of an effective filing system could promote security and justice within the ADM. For the appropriate filing practices to be successful, political and administrative role-players must be responsive and accountable (World Bank, 2002:36).
Figure 4.4.2. Loss of control of financial records in a decentralised system.

Question 15

A decentralised records management system is too costly to maintain.

Out of 48 respondents 40 per cent indicated that they agree with the above statement, 29 per cent returned a neutral response or did not know, 27 per cent strongly agreed and 4 per cent disagreed. This result indicates that the majority of respondents understand the costs involved with a decentralised system. The respondents are aware of the current status of the records management system at the ADM. Institutions which have large numbers of employees with a decentralised records management system require additional office accommodation such as offices, shelving and cabinets. Diagramme 4.4.2.Q15 refers.
Figure 4.4.2. A decentralised records management system is too costly to maintain.

4.4.3 SECTION C:

In this section that follows below, the respondents were provided with the opportunity to briefly explain their opinions pertaining to the Amathole District Municipality in terms of its records management system.

**Question 16**

*Do you think that the current decentralised system has a negative impact on the Integrated Development Plan? If yes why, if no why not?*

The findings and results are reflected below in Table 4.4.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Missing response</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.4.3. Impact of a decentralised records management system on the Integrated Development Plan.

A large number of respondents being 69 per cent felt that the current decentralised system has a negative impact on the Integrated Development Plan and consequently could have considerable cost implications to the institution in terms of resources. 10 per cent of respondents stated that it is more appropriate because they can better manage the projects they are responsible for. 6 per cent of the respondents supported their responses by indicating that they do not know how the records management system links with the Integrated Development Plan. 15 per cent of respondents did not attempt any response and left the space blank.

Question 17

*Do you think that one centre for information management is the most appropriate system for the ADM? If yes why, if no why not?*
Table 4.4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures 4.4.3. One centre for information (centralised system) - ADM.

A total of 98 per cent of respondents indicated that they felt it would be easy to control documents from one central point. Views expressed included that one centre for information contained the memory or history of the Amathole District Municipality. It provides a single entry and exit point for all of the municipality’s documents. It would also be more convenient to access information or documents for audit purposes. It would assist with the effective and efficient accessibility of documents and avoid the duplication of records. It would further ensure the proper safe-keeping of documents pertaining to the institution. On the other hand, 2 per cent of the respondents indicated that it would be preferable to maintain the records in a decentralised records management system. In their responses this group of respondents indicated that one centre for information would consist of large volumes of documents and it would take time to obtain the required files.
The majority of respondents acknowledged, however, that a centralised system for information management of records at the ADM would be the most appropriate system.

**Question 18**

*In your view where should records be kept for easy access at the ADM? Please motivate your answer.*

**Table 4.4.3. Views on easy access of records.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>A central records management unit</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Decentralised</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In one central point but each department would have its own representative</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to note that a large number of respondents, namely 96 per cent, indicated their preference for a Central Records Management Unit to be responsible for all ADM records. Respondents largely cited that the registry staff are the ones who understand the legislation governing information management. Records are filed and kept in a systematic manner and this facilitates the efficient tracking of pending files within the institution. Officials who remove files sign the register of files (control measures of files) and sign a 2nd time when returning a file(s). According to the graph below, 2 per cent of the respondents prefer a decentralised records management system. The respondents’ view is that records management practices would be easier and more accessible if each department had their own records clerk who would be responsible for the safe keeping of departmental records. A further 2 per cent indicated that they would prefer a single central point with officials who understand or have insight of records management pertaining to the department she or he
represents (for example, Supply Chain Management Unit, Human Resources Department, Budget and Treasury Office and Community Services Division).

![Pie chart showing place for easy access of records Q18]

**Figure 4.4.3. Preferred storage for easy access of records – ADM.**

**Question 19**

*How often do you forward correspondence to the Corporate Affairs Division? Please motivate your answer.*

**Table 4.4.3.Q19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This section or division has the storage area where information and records are frequently referred to for easy access. Records are filed and stored according to a logical scheme to permit timely and accurate retrieval (Technikon SA, 2000: 18). 46 per cent of the respondents confirmed that they forward correspondence to the Records Management Unit. 48 per cent of the respondents indicated that they fail to forward correspondence to the Unit, whilst 6 per cent did not answer the question. A prime consideration arises, namely, why certain individuals preferred not to forward the correspondence though they are aware that it should be kept at the Records Office.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.4.3. Use of the Records Unit at the ADM.

Question 20

Does a decentralised records management system have a positive or a negative impact on proper records management? How would you state the current records management practices at the ADM? Please motivate your answer.
Table 4.4.3. Impact of a decentralised records management system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of respondents</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Missing response</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not clear</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.4.3. Impact of a decentralised records management system.

10 per cent of the respondents indicated a positive impact, 82 per cent indicated that the current decentralised system has a negative impact on records management, 6 per cent did not respond and 2 per cent indicated that it is not clear at the moment because both systems are used. The researcher holds the view that a capacity building workshop should be facilitated to inform employees on the different records management systems (decentralised versus centralised) so that employees can be aware and utilise the appropriate system effectively. The majority of respondents being 82 per cent felt that the decentralised system has a negative impact. Below are responses that were provided by the respondents in relation to their feelings on the records management system at the ADM:
- There is no proper control of records. Individuals tend to keep the records at their offices and are not aware of the retention period, that is, when records are due for disposal.
- There is no uniformity on the filing system. Records may get lost and are untraceable.
- There appear to be limited control measures and little compliance in terms of records management regulations and procedures.
- The files kept in a decentralised system have no reference numbers. The file plan is not used for reference numbers to assist in the easy tracking of documents. The document management system (Documentum) is not properly utilised or implemented by ADM officials.
- Officials who keep records in their offices are not trained in the best practices of records management. The ADM has a partly decentralised system and this causes poor records management practices.
- The ADM might be exposed to a wide range of risk or loose valuable records due to poor records management systems. The confidential documents are accessible to numerous employees who are largely unaware of the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000. This implies that the Records Manager has a considerable role to play in educating employees at the ADM.
- ADM employees often do not value records as a business activity. After they have finished with certain records they are destroyed. A decentralised records system has no restriction in terms of “intruders”. Employees can access information at any time, which poses a challenge for the ADM.
- Not all records are registered and filed. The records management system is experiencing challenges as most departments store their own records. There is limited proper survey for records to be archived or disposed of or forwarded to the Records Management Unit.

From the above responses it is deduced that employees are generally familiar with their responsibility as far as records management is concerned at the ADM. They understand that records contain, inter alia, the history, evidence, fiscal planning and decisions of the municipality.
4.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on the findings from the empirical survey and analysis of the collected data, the points below are briefly reviewed in terms of the records management system at the Amathole District Municipality:

- Legislation regulating records management;
- Efficiency of a centralised system;
- The impact of a decentralised system on proper management of records;
- Access to and usage of Records Management Unit as records storage;
- Training and awareness workshops on records management;
- The impact of decentralised system on the Integrated Development Plan; and
- The current status of records management system at the ADM.

4.5.1 Legislation regulating records management

In accordance with the National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of 1996, as amended, government bodies fall under the jurisdiction of the National Archivist. The Provincial Archives are required to be responsible for the records of provincial and local authorities and they operate following the guidelines of the National Archivist. In chapter 3 of this treatise legislation regulating records management highlighted the role of users in managing records in an organisation. 34 per cent of respondents were familiar with the applicable legislation. The results indicated that records management practices still face challenges. In general it appears that ADM employees are not committed to best practices pertaining to records management. 29 per cent of the respondents indicated that they do not understand the legislation applicable to records management, which presents a concern for the municipality. This implies that certain ADM employees do not regard themselves as part of records management practices. They create records on an ad hoc basis, which is of concern.

4.5.2 Efficiency of a centralised records system

A centralised registry is one where records of common interest to employees are placed in one location under the control of one supervisor. 98 per cent of respondents indicated that one centre for information, where records entering and leaving the registry are recorded and registered, is preferred. Only 2 per cent of the respondents indicated that it is best for
employees to keep the records they generate. Records users preferred uniformity on systems regulating records practices. This result implies that certain of the employees are not familiar with the correct records procedures and practices. Although 98 per cent of respondents are positive about having one centre for information, much work needs to be done at the ADM as far as the records management system is concerned.

4.5.3 The impact of a decentralised system on proper management of records

According to Technikon SA (2000: 17), a decentralised records system is one where records created and used by one department are stored in that particular department. In this regard questions 4; 10; 11; 12; 14; 15 and 20 are related. The purpose was to probe the opinions of the respondents on the impact encountered in a decentralised records management system at the ADM. The responses cited imply that more than 80 per cent of respondents revealed the effects of a decentralised system on the proper management of records at the ADM. Only 20 per cent of the respondents preferred a decentralised system. Top management needs to design a system that will best suit the business and employees within the municipality.

4.5.4 Access to and usage of a Records Management Unit for records storage

According to Technikon SA (2000: 15), records are housed in the storage devices and protected and maintained in order to safeguard the integrity of the information. Questions 2, 5 and 6 were linked to establish whether respondents are familiar with the use and storage for the safekeeping of records. 90 per cent of the respondents preferred one centre for easy access of information. Only 10 per cent were of the view that they would prefer to keep records in individual offices. This result implies a degree of negligence as there is no clear reason for such a practice. Records are meant for business activities. The easy accessibility of records and the use of records storage clearly explain the importance of records management systems to improve accountability by the users.

4.5.5 Training and awareness workshops on records management

40 per cent of the respondents indicated the need for training on records management practices and procedures. While 25 per cent of the respondents indicated a neutral response, 35 per cent of the respondents agreed that they receive on-going training. Records users, as role-players, need to be capacitated on records management procedures and also on the need for correct systems to be in place.
4.5.6 The impact of decentralised system on the Integrated Development Plan

A total of 69 per cent of the respondents indicated that a decentralised system had a negative impact while 10 per cent responded that it has a positive impact and each department would be responsible for its own records. 6 per cent did not know how the records management system links with the IDP and 15 per cent did not respond to the question.

4.5.7 The current status of records management system at ADM

A large number of respondents, namely 82 per cent, indicated that the ADM has a partly decentralised system, which results in a negative impact on records management. 10 per cent of the respondents indicated a positive impact as those employees kept the records they generated for confidentiality, whilst 6 per cent did not respond and 2 per cent indicated that the current system is not clear whether it is centralised or decentralised system.

CONCLUSION

The quantitative research methodology was selected for this study. The questionnaire technique was used as the tool for the purposes of data collection. A survey of an empirical nature was conducted and the results were presented and analysed through tables and graphs.

The respondents indicated their opinions on the status of the records management system at the Amathole District Municipality. The empirical survey indicates that further capacity building programmes need to be undertaken by the ADM in terms of promoting a more efficient and effective records management system. Training, workshops and an awareness of records management requirements are some of the challenges currently facing the ADM. Records users should be able to identify a record in the context of the broader business functions and sequence of activities relating to the municipality.

In the chapter that follows certain conclusions and recommendations are presented based on the literature review and empirical survey.
5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the study was to assess the records management system with reference to the Amathole District Municipality. The empirical survey investigated the effects of a decentralised records management system on the proper management of records at the ADM. This chapter summarises the study and certain recommendations are proposed for an improved records management system.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study was divided into five chapters:

Chapter 1

This chapter provided the background, rationale for the study as well as the statement of the problem, objectives and primary questions that the study sought to answer.

Chapter 2

This chapter gave a brief review of literature on the most authoritative scholarship pertaining to the research problem. The definitions of terms used throughout the study were also provided in this chapter.

Chapter 3

The main focus of this chapter was on the records management system with reference to the Amathole District Municipality. It examined the distinctions of a decentralised and a centralised records management system. The disadvantages of a decentralised system were also discussed.

Chapter 4

This chapter described the research methodology in terms of research design, methods and techniques. A quantitative research methodology was adopted and the data analysis and interpretation of the results from the questionnaires, were presented.
Chapter 5

This is the final chapter of the treatise and it focused on the overall conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations made regarding remedial action relating to the problem statement and objectives. In addition, the value of an appropriate records management system and training of employees is emphasised. Finally, the aspects for further research are identified.

5.3. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to the Amathole District Municipality’s main office in East London. The ADM satellite offices were excluded from the study for the reason that in the last decade there was no formal plans on how to manage the records in those satellite offices. In June 2014, the ADM employed Senior Managers in the satellite offices to be responsible for, among other duties, the implementation of a Records Management Policy to ensure that ADM officials forward such records to the main office on an annual basis. The satellite offices also have area managers but they appear to not regard themselves as part of records management practices. A road show on Records Management Policy for the 2014/2015 financial year was conducted to raise awareness in the ADM satellite offices.

5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the most crucial and challenging aspects facing the records management system at the ADM. In this regard the following recommendations are proposed:

5.4.1 Adherence to legislations regulating records

According to the National Archives and Records Service Act 43 of 1996, section 13(2)(a), no record in a client office may be transferred to an archives repository, destroyed, erased or otherwise disposed of without the written authorisation of the National/Provincial Archivist. The Records Manager should empower all employees to be aware of the above-mentioned
Act and all other legislative prescriptions pertaining to records management at the ADM. Such empowerment could take the form of workshops.

5.4.2 Implementation of policies and records procedure manuals

Certain ADM employees understand their roles and responsibilities in terms of proper records management protocols. All staff should possess a thorough knowledge of the organisation’s (municipality’s) policies and procedures. Training on these policies and procedures should ideally be conducted on a quarterly basis to retain awareness and promote lifelong learning on records management practices.

5.4.3 Importance of one centre (centralised system) for information management

Registries are mostly established on a centralised basis to ensure uniformity of methods. The findings from the empirical survey revealed that the majority of officials preferred one centre for the custody and care of records. A control for records in the sub-registries should be correctly classified. Those sub-registries should be listed under the supervision of the Records Manager. He or she is the one who should be able to identify any risks as well as implement internal controls to ensure the efficient management of the records. Furthermore, the Records Manager makes decisions with regard to records disposal. Non-disposal of records results in a challenge for space that leads to the improper maintenance of records.

5.4.4 Training of staff and the role players on records management

Based on the findings from the quantitative study ADM officials also need to be trained on records management practices. It is important to keep updating all employees through training as records are the business activity of the day-to-day life of the organisation (municipality). Regular workshops should be conducted for employees.

5.4.5 Professionalism in appropriate recordkeeping system

Based on the findings from the study it is observed that ADM employees do not maintain a proper records keeping system. Officials generally tend to create correspondence without allocating the correct reference numbers and then locate the files in their cabinets. In addition, the use of a file plan is important to ensure that the filing system and files are properly controlled.
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Records are critically important to the operations of any organisation. Employees must comply with the legislation regulating records management systems. A record should remain a credible information source in any organisation. It is important that all staff employed by the ADM should be trained in the correct procedures and protocols pertaining to the keeping and management of records. It would be to the advantage of the municipality if the Records Manager provides training to all individual in the use of the file plan (National Archives Directive R2, 1998: 2). Further attention should ideally also be paid to the following aspects:

- The establishment of proper systems for records management;
- The intervention of top management in the implementation of records management practices; and
- The training of staff on appropriate records procedures.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The research study was conducted to assess the records management system with reference to the ADM. The study revealed the effects of a decentralised system as well as the importance of a centralised records management system in an institution. Based on the findings gleaned from both primary and secondary sources, the following conclusions emerged from the survey:

- Best record keeping systems are crucial for sound records management practices;
- Inadequate records management systems expose the organisation to risks, fraud and corruption;
- One centre for information promotes the professional life cycle of a record; and
- The disposal of old records needs to be considered.

The overall conclusion of the research is that the existing records management system is inadequate and affects the proper management of records at the Amathole District Municipality. Immediate interventions are required to avoid the loss of valuable records at
In addition, the ADM needs to undertake the disposal of inactive records as a matter of urgency. Training should also be provided to all records users at the ADM. Furthermore, owing to institutional growth, the ADM needs to have its own building with adequate registry offices. Senior management intervention is necessary to expedite the implementation of a sound records management system. In addition, Registry Clerks in satellite offices should be appointed and trained in records management to ensure that the ADM complies with the National Archives Act, 1996. Furthermore, additional research is recommended on the records management systems at other selected municipalities in the country.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


**DICTIONARY**


**INTERNET**

http://www.epa.gov/records/tools/central.htm

http://managementstudyguide.com/centralisation.decentralisation.htm


http://www.municipalityguide.co.za/amathole-municipality

http://recordsmanagementstudyguide.com/centralised_decentralised.htm


**JOURNAL**


Shepherd, E. & Yeo, G. 2006. ‘Why are records in the public sector organisational assets?’ Records Management Journal 16 (1), 9-12

**GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS**


**NEWS PAPER ARTICLES**

Daily Dispatch. 2013. 03 February: 2.

Mail & Guardian News 2014. 11 April: 15.

OTHER SOURCES


THESIS/DISSERTATION


http://www.man.ac.uk/idpm_dp.htm#isps-wp
## Annexure A

**Amathole District Municipality**

**File Movement Register**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File No.</th>
<th>Date Taken</th>
<th>Taken By</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Registry Official</th>
<th>Returned By</th>
<th>Signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Registry Procedure Manual, February, 2005*
AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

DISPOSAL AUTHORITY

General Disposal Authorities are issued for categories of records used by more than one government body, e.g. financial records, contract files, personal files, personal staff files, etc.

Please note: The existence of a General Disposal Authority does not automatically imply that the records can be destroyed. The authorities cover both archival and non-archival records.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of documents (drafts, reminders, acknowledgements of receipt)</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>General Disposal Authority Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Registry Procedure Manual, February, 2005
ANNEXURE C

AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

DESTRUCTION CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the records listed below which occupied …… …… linear meters of shelving/storage space were destroyed today in terms of disposal authority/authorities number(s) ………………… …………………….

Name of Office: ……………………………….

Name of Records Manager …………………

Telephone: ………………………………….

Fax: …………………………………………

Cell: ………………………………………….

E-mail: ………………………………………

Signature: ……………………………………

Date: ……………………………………………

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PERIOD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Where a series of case files is destroyed, e.g. personal staff files, files for institution, or item files, the listing of individual files is not required, unless the body wishes to compile such a list for its own purposes: In such a case, only the first and last file numbers and the periods are indicated in the first and third columns, and a comprehensive description of the whole group is recorded in the second column.

Registry Procedure Manual, February, 2005
## ANNEXURE D

AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

DISPOSAL REGISTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RECORD GROUP</th>
<th>PLACE OF CUSTODY</th>
<th>DISPOSAL AUTHORITY NUMBER</th>
<th>DATE OF EXECUTION</th>
<th>REMARKS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_REGISTRY Procedure Manual, February, 2005_
ANNEXURE E

AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

TRANSFER LIST

1. Name of body/office ……………………………

2. Street address ………………………………………

3. Extent of records in linear meters …………………

4. Disposal authority number1 …………………

5. Official dealing with transfer …………………

6. Telephone ………………………………………

7. Fax ………………………………………………..

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item, Box or Package No.</th>
<th>File, Register or Form No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Period in years</th>
<th>Proposed Disposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transferring Official: Signature……………………… Date ……………

Receiving Official: Signature ………………………….. Date ……………

1. If you do not yet have an authority number, you must place your disposal recommendations in the disposal column. This list will then be used to issue disposal authority.

2. Where records which have already been designated for permanent preservation by the National Archivist are transferred, this column can be deleted.

3. When a file consists of more than one volume, each individual volume must be listed.

Registry Procedure Manual, February, 2005
Hello, my name is Nomsa Ncamani and my student number is: 213400693. I am currently reading for a Master’s Degree in Public Administration (MPA) at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and working on my Research Project (Treatise). The title of my treatise is: An assessment of the records management system with reference to the Amathole District Municipality.

Your assistance in completing this questionnaire, which will take approximately 10-15 minutes, will be much appreciated. Kindly be advised that the information obtained from this questionnaire will be treated as confidential and will be used for academic purposes and possible journal publication only. No names or any other form of participant identification will be mentioned in the final treatise or journal article. All the questions are important for various aspects of the study so you are encouraged to answer all questions. However, should you feel uncomfortable answering any particular question(s) please feel free to omit such question(s).

Thank you again for your kind participation.

Sincerely

Ms. Nomsa Ncamani

Mobile: 0730619404
**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR AMATHOLE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY OFFICIALS**

**SECTION A: (PERSONAL/BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE)**

PLEASE MARK THE APPLICABLE BOX WITH AN “X”

**A1. AGE GROUP (IN YEARS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. 20-35</th>
<th>2. 36-45</th>
<th>3. 46-55</th>
<th>4. +56</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**A2. GENDER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. MALE</th>
<th>2. FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**A3. HIGHEST QUALIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. GRADE 12 (MATRIC)</th>
<th>2. DIPLOMA</th>
<th>3. DEGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. POST-GRADUATE</td>
<td>5. OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A4. JOB LEVEL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. SENIOR MANAGER</th>
<th>2. MID-MANAGER</th>
<th>3. OTHER (e.g. Supervisor, Admin. Assistant)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**A5. LENGTH OF SERVICE IN THE ABOVE POSITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1. &lt;1 YEAR</th>
<th>2. 1-4 YEARS</th>
<th>3. 5-9 YEARS</th>
<th>4. 10-19 YEARS</th>
<th>5. &gt;20 YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
SECTION B: (List of possible questions using the Likert Rating Scale)

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = I don’t know / neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

PLEASE MARK THE APPLICABLE BOX WITH AN “X”

1. Amathole District Municipality (ADM) officials understand the legislative prescriptions regulating records management.

2. A centralised records system is more efficient compared to a decentralised system.

3. All records created are captured into the appropriate records keeping system upon creation or receipt.

4. ADM should utilise a decentralised records management system.

5. A well-planned centralised records management system holds data used across the organisation, allowing all staff to access such records.
6. One centre for information management is the most appropriate system for the ADM.

7. Staff receive on-going training and awareness workshops relating to records management.

8. A uniform records management system should be used in all records stations at the ADM.

9. ADM officials understand their role and responsibilities in terms of proper records management protocols.

10. In a decentralised records management system, records are scattered across the various departments causing delays in accessing information.

11. A decentralised records management system causes inconsistency across the various departments within the ADM.
12. Decentralised filing locations usually have problems with duplicate records being stored in filing cabinets around the offices.

13. Poor records management could expose the organisation to legal consequences due to non-compliance with regulations on records management.

14. In a decentralised filing system the loss of control of financial records creates opportunities for fraud and corruption and impedes fiscal planning.

15. A decentralised records management system is too costly to maintain.

SECTION C:

Please explain, in one or two brief sentences, your opinion pertaining to the Amathole District Municipality in terms of its records management system in terms of the questions below:

16. Do you think that the current decentralised system has a negative impact on the Integrated Development Plan? If yes why, if no why not?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

111
17. Do you think that one centre for information management is the most appropriate system for ADM? If yes why, if no why not?

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

18. In your view where should records be kept for easy access at the ADM? Please motivate your answer.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

19. How often do you forward correspondence to the Corporate Affairs Division? Please motivate your answer.

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20. Does a decentralised records management system have a positive or a negative impact on proper records management? How would you state the current records management practices at ADM? Please motivate your answer.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND COOPERATION IN ANSWERING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.