Document Retention and Disposal Policy

Adopted 1st April 2025 Minute 216.24a

Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The guidelines set out in this document supports the Council's Data Protection Policy and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation & The Data Protection Act 2018 and other associated legislation.

1.2 It is important that the Council has in place arrangements for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate management of services in undertaking its responsibilities. This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention of documents and sets out the requirements for the disposal of documents. However, it is important to note that this is a live document and will be updated on a regular basis.

1.3 The Council will ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its functions and the provision of services, whilst adhering to any legal or statutory requirements.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

2.1 It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is vital to support the work of the Council and the services it provides to its community. This document will help it to:

- Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the community;
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004;
- Save officer time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information which may be held unnecessarily. This will assist them in their daily duties and when searching for information requested under the Freedom of Information Act;
- Ensure archival records which are of historic and regulatory value are appropriately retained.

3.0 Scope

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, 'documents' include electronic, microfilm, microfiche and paper records.

3.2 Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained where possible.

4.0 Standards

4.1 The Council will make every effort to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:

- Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule at Annex A. This document provides a framework for good

practice requirements for retaining information;
- Personal information will be retained in locked filing cabinets within the Parish Office, and access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel;
- Disclosure information will be retained in a locked cabinet in the Parish Office;
- Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required;
- Take appropriate measures to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed;
- Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes;
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information will be retained and that will be held within the Parish Office.

5.0 Breach of Policy and Standards

5.1 Any employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from this Policy may, depending on the circumstances of the case, have disciplinary action taken against them, including dismissal.

6.0 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Clerk has overall responsibility for the policy.

6.2 The Clerk is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.

6.2 Other delegated staff are responsible for ensuring their records are kept and destroyed in line with this policy.

6.3 The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the guidelines set out in this policy are adhered to and to ensure that any documents disposed of are done so in accordance with their ‘sensitivity’ ie whether they are normal or confidential waste.

7.0 Confidential Waste

7.1 Any information which is required to be produced under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations, is available on the website or is open to public inspection should NOT be treated as confidential waste. However, any information that is protected by the Data Protection Act or as Confidential under the Council’s regulations should be treated as confidential waste for disposal purposes.

7.2 Examples of what constitutes confidential waste:
- Exempt information contained within Council and Committee reports;
- Files containing the personal details of an individual and files which predominantly relate to a particular individual or their circumstances, for example completed application forms and letters;
- Materials given to the Council on a ‘confidential’ or limited use basis eg material provided by contractors or the police.

7.3 Examples of what does not constitute confidential waste;
- Documents which are available to the public via the Council’s website or by

submitting an appropriate search request to the Council for general information;

- All reports and background papers of matters taken to Council or Committees in public session, unless specifically exempt.

8.0 Disposal of Documentation

8.1 Confidential waste which clearly shows any personal information or information which can be identified using the parameters set out in 7.3 will be shredded within the Parish Office.

9.0 Retention

9.1 Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Professional Development (CIPD) guidelines.

9.2 Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place.

9.3 Disclosure information pertaining to Disclosure and Barring Checks must be kept securely in a locked cabinet. Only those entitled to see it in the course of their duties should have access. The security and confidentiality of all Disclosure information is closely registered under the Police Act 1997.

9.4 Disclosure information must not be retained for a period of more than six months and must be destroyed in a secure manner using the shredder in the Parish Office.

9.5 Any unauthorised employee accessing or attempting to access Disclosures or Disclosure information or personnel records will be dealt with under the Council's disciplinary procedures.

9.6 The attached 'Appendix A' shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents. Officers holding those document types should exercise judgment on whether they can be disposed of at the end of the stated retention periods.

11.0 Handling

11.1 The Council complies with s124 of the Police Act 1997, so that Disclosure Information is only passed to those who are authorised to receive it in the course of their duties. The Council maintains a record of all those to whom Disclosures or Disclosure Information has been revealed and recognises that it is a criminal offence to pass this information to anyone who is not entitled to receive it.

11.2 Personal information will only be available to those who are authorised officers.

12.0 Usage

12.1 Disclosure information is only used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's/employee's consent has been given. Disclosure Information will be shared between different areas of the Council, if necessary.

12.2 Where Disclosure information is shared with anyone other than the Clerk, the employee must be given a reason why this information is being shared.

APPENDIX A

Recommended Document Retention Timescales

The list below is not exhaustive. The retention period should be the number of years specified plus the current financial year (ie three years plus the current financial, to ensure that at least three years' documentation is habitually retained at any given point in time).

Finance:

Financial Published Final Accounts	Indefinitely
Signed Audited Accounts	Indefinitely
Final Account working papers	5 years
Records of all accounting transactions held by the Financial Management System	At least 5 years -
Cash Books (records of monies paid out and received)	6 years
Purchase Orders	6 years
Cheque Payment Listings (Invoices received)	6 years
Payment Vouchers Capital and Revenue (copy invoices)	6 years
BACS listings	6 years
Goods received notes, advice notes and delivery notes	1 year
Copy receipts	6 years
Petty cash vouchers and reimbursement claims	6 years
Debtors and rechargeable works records	6 years
Expenses and travel allowance claims	6 years
Asset Register for statutory accounting purposes	10 years
Journal Sheets	5 years
Ledger / Trial Balance	10 years
Year-end ledger tabulations – ledger details and cost updates	5 years
Published Budget Books	Indefinitely Medium Term
Financial Plan	Indefinitely
Budget Estimates – Detailed Working Papers and summaries	1 years
Bank Statement (Disk Space) and Instructions to banks	6 years
Bank Statements (Hardcopy)	6 years
Banking Records including Giro cheques, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments	6 years -
Prime evidence that money has been banked	6 years
Refer to Drawer (RD) cheques	2 years
Cancelled Expenditure cheques	2 years
Bank Reconciliation	3 years
Cheques presented / drawn on the Council bank accounts	3 years
Prime records that money has been correctly recorded in the Councils financial systems	3 years -
Grant/Funding Applications & Claims	5 years
Precept Forms	Indefinitely
Internal Audit Plans/ Reports	3 years
Fees and Charges Schedules	5 years

Time sheets and overtime claims	6 years
Payroll and tax information relating to employees	6 years
Payroll costing analysis	2 years
Records of payment made to employees for salaries / wages (including intermediate payslips)	6 years -
Statutory year end returns to Inland Revenue & Pensions Section	Indefinitely -
Loans and Investment Records; temporary loan receipts and loan tabulations	6 years (after redemption of loan)
VAT, Income Tax and National Insurance Records	6 years
Current and expired insurance contracts and policies Insurance records and claims	Indefinitely 6 years
Capital and contracts register	Indefinitely
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand (Blank)	6 years from completion of contract
Final accounts of contracts executed under seal (Blank)	12 years from completion of contract
All Other reconciliations	3 years

Personnel:

Unsuccessful application forms	6 months
Unsuccessful reference requests	1 year
Successful applications forms and CVs	Duration of employment + 2 years
References received	Duration of employment + 2 years
Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.	Duration of employment + 2 years
Annual leave records	Duration of employment + 2 years
Unpaid leave/special leave	Duration of employment + 2 years
Annual appraisal/assessment records (Blank)	Current year and previous 2 years
Time Control Records	2 years
Criminal Records Bureau Checks	6 months
Personnel files and training records (Blank)	2 years after employment ceases
Disciplinary or grievance investigations – proved - Verbal - Written - Final warning - Anything involving children	- 6 months 1 year 18 months permanently
Disciplinary or grievance investigations – unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal
Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc. (Blank)	3 years after the tax year in which the maternity period ended
Salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc.	6 years

Corporate:

Minutes and reports of Committee meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports for Special Committee meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports of sub-committees	Indefinitely
Notes and reports of working groups	Indefinitely
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed
Asset Management records	Indefinitely
Asset management reports	Indefinitely
Internal audit records	3 years
Risk register	Indefinitely
Risk management reports	Indefinitely
Performance reports	Indefinitely
Equalities data	Indefinitely
Questionnaire data	Indefinitely
Details regarding burials	Indefinitely
Fuel usage records	3 years
Allotment application forms	Length of Tenancy + 1 years
Allotment agreements	Length of Tenancy + 1 years
Pre-tender qualification document Summary list of expression of interest received Company Contacts A summary of any financial or technical evaluation supplied with the expressions of interest Initial application	1 year - - -
Successful tender documentation Life of contract	6 years
Unsuccessful tender documentation	Until final payment is made
Deeds of land and property	Indefinitely
Land and property rental agreements	6 years after expiry of the agreement
Property evaluation lists	Indefinitely
Lease agreements, variation and valuation queries	6 years after the expiry of the agreement
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years

Health & Safety:

Health and Safety Accident books (Blank)	3 years after the date of the last entry (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained Within
Medical records containing details of employee exposed to asbestos or as specified by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999	40 years from the date of the last entry -
Medical examination certificates	4 years from date of issue
Records relating to accidents person over 18 years	3 years from date of accident
Records relating to accidents person under 18 years	Until 21st birthday
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years -
Parks and play area inspection reports	5 years
All inspection certificates (Gas Safe, FENSA etc.)	2 years
Repairs job sheets	2 years
Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc.)	2 years -
Warranties	10 years
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of general waste	3 years -
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of hazardous waste	10 years -
Plant and equipment testing	2 years
Risk Assessment Forms	2 years
Unusual Incident Forms	3 years
Manual Handling Assessment Forms	3 years

Additional Items

Approved Minutes	Indefinite
Draft/Rough notes taken at meeting	Until draft minutes are produced
Correspondence received from members of the public	Until resolution + 1 year