

DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The guidelines set out in this document supports the Town Council's responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 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 Shildon Town 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 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is vital to support the work that the Council do and the services that we provide to our residents. This document will help us to:-
 - Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public.
 - Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.
 - Save employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily. This will assist them as they carry out their daily duties, or if searching for information requested under the Freedom of Information Act.
 - Ensure archived records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

3 Scope

- 3.1 For the purpose of this Strategy, 'documents' includes electronic and paper records.
- 3.2 Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained where possible.

4 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 Appendix A. This document provides a framework for good practice requirements for retaining information.
- Personal employee information will be retained in locked filing cabinets within the Wages Office and access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel.
- Disclosure information will be retained in a locked cabinet in the Town Clerks Office.
- Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required.
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed.
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information will be retained.

5 Breach of Policy and Standards

5.1 The Council should ensure that all employees are aware of, and abide by, the Retention/Disposal Schedule.

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for the policy.

6.2 Service Managers are responsible for ensuring their records are kept and destroyed in line with this policy.

7 Confidential Waste

7.1 Fundamentally any information that 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.

7.2 However, any information that is protected by the Data Protection Act or classed as confidential should be treated as confidential waste for disposal purposes.

7.3 **Examples of what constitutes confidential waste:**

- Exempt information contained within committee reports.
- Files containing the personal details of an individual and files that predominantly relate to a particular individual or their circumstances. For example, completed application forms and letters.

- Materials given to us on a 'confidential' or on a limited use basis e.g. material provided by contractors or the police.

7.4 **Examples of what does not constitute confidential waste:**

- Documents that are available to the public via our web site or by submitting an appropriate search request to ourselves for general information.
- All reports and background papers of matters taken to Committee in public session unless specifically exempt.

8 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 council buildings.

9 Retention

9.1 Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using the relevant legislative requirements.

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

9.3 Disclosure information regarding Disclosure and Barring Checks must be kept securely in a locked cabinet and only those entitled to see it in the course of their duties will have access.

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 main 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' shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by those officers responsible for the management of these particular documentation types. Officers holding documents should exercise judgement as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of those periods detailed in the attached 'Appendix'.

10 Storage and Access

10.1 Disclosure information is kept separately from personnel files and in securely lockable, non-portable cabinet with access strictly controlled and limited to the Town Clerk and Finance and Policy Officer.

11 Usage

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 Where Disclosure information is shared with anyone other than the Town Clerk and the direct Manager the employee must be given a reason why this information is being shared.

APPENDIX A**Recommended Document Retention Timescales**

The retention period should be the number of years specified **plus** the current financial period (i.e. three years plus the current period, therefore at least three years documentation will always be retained at any given point in time).

This list is not exhaustive, if you are unsure about any document contact the Town Clerk for clarification.

Document	Retention Period	Disposal
Financial		
Published Final Accounts	Indefinitely	
Signed Audited Accounts	Indefinitely	
Final Account working papers	5 years	shred
Purchase Orders	6 years	shred
Paid invoices	6 years	shred
BACS listings	6 years	shred
Goods received notes, advice notes and delivery notes	6 years	shred
Copy receipts	6 years	shred
Petty cash vouchers and reimbursement claims	6 years	shred
Debtors and rechargeable works records	6 years	shred
Expenses and travel allowance claims	6 years	shred
Asset Register	Indefinitely	
Ledger/Trial Balance	5 years	shred
Approved Budget	Indefinitely	
Budget Estimates – Detailed Working Papers and summaries	5 years	shred
Bank Statements	6 years	shred
Banking records including Giro cheques etc.	6 years	shred
Bank paying in books	6 years	shred
Refer to Drawer (RD) cheques	2 years	shred
Cancelled expenditure cheques	2 years	shred
Bank reconciliation	3 years	shred
DCS sheets	3 years	shred
Grant/Funding applications and claims eg LIP	Minimum 5 years	shred
Precept forms	Indefinitely	
Internal Audit Plans/Reports	3 years	shred
Fees and Charges schedules	6 years	shred
Time sheets and overtime claims	6 years	shred
Payroll and tax information relating to employees	6 years	shred
Payroll costing analysis	2 years	shred
Records of payment made to employees for salaries/wages (including payslips)	6 years	shred
Statutory end of year returns to Inland Revenue and Pensions Section	Indefinitely	

Document	Retention Period	Disposal
Loans and Investment Records	10 years (after redemption of loan)	shred
VAT, Income Tax and National Insurance Records	10 years	shred
Current and expired insurance contracts and policies	Indefinitely	shred
Insurance records and claims	10 years	shred
Final accounts of contracts	12 years from completion of contract	shred
All other reconciliations	3 years	shred
Personnel		
Successful application forms and CV's	For duration of employment + 5 years	shred
References received	For duration of employment + 5 years	shred
Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.	For duration of employment + 5 years	shred
Annual leave records	For duration of employment + 5 years	shred
Unpaid leave/special leave	For duration of employment + 5 years	shred
Criminal Records Bureau Checks	For duration of employment + 5 years	shred
Personnel files and training records	5 years after employment ceases	shred
Disciplinary or grievance investigations – proved	Verbal – 6 months Written – 1 year Final warning – 18 months	shred
Disciplinary or grievance investigations – unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal	shred
Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc.	3 years after the tax year in which the maternity period ended	shred
Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc.	6 years	shred
Corporate		
Minutes of Committee meetings	Indefinitely	
Minutes of Special Committee meetings	Indefinitely	
Minutes of sub-committees	Indefinitely	
Reports of Committee meetings	5 years	bin
Reports of Special Committee meetings	5 years	bin
Reports of sub-committees	5 years	bin
Notes and reports of working groups	Indefinitely	
Councillor Reports and Minutes		bin
Councillor Confidential Reports		Shred
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed	bin

Document	Retention Period	Disposal
Asset Management records	Indefinitely	
Asset Management reports	Indefinitely	
Internal audit records	3 years	shred
Internal audit fraud investigation	7 years from date of final outcome of investigation	shred
Risk register	Indefinitely	
Risk Management reports	Indefinitely	
Details regarding burials	Indefinitely	
Vehicle maintenance and registration records (all necessary certificates, MOT certificates, test records and vehicle registration documents etc.)	2 years after vehicle disposed of	shred
Allotment application forms	Length of Tenancy + 2 years	shred
Allotment agreements	Length of Tenancy + 2 years	shred
Summary list of expression of interest received Company contacts A summary of any financial or technical evaluation supplied with the expressions of interest) 3 years or life of contract))	shred
Successful tender documentation	Life of contract + 6 years	shred
Deeds of land and property	Indefinitely	
Land and property rental agreements	6 years after expiry of the agreement	shred
Lease agreements, variation and valuation queries	6 years after the expiry of the agreement	shred
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years	shred
Civic Hall		
Booking forms	6 years	shred
Booking diaries	6 years	shred
Premises License applications	Indefinitely	shred
Performing Rights Society (PRS)	1 year	shred
Health and Safety		
Accident books	3 years after the date of the last entry (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained within * see below)	shred
* Medial 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	shred
Medical examination certificates	4 years from date of issue	shred
Records relating to accidents – person over 18 years	3 years from date of accident	shred

Document	Retention Period	Disposal
Records relating to accidents – person under 18 years	Until 21 st birthday	shred
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years	shred
Parks and play area inspection reports	5 years	shred
All inspection certificates (CORGI, FENSA etc.)	2 years	shred
Repairs job sheets	2 years	bin
Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)	2 years	bin
Warranties	10 years	bin
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of general waste	3 years	shred
Transporting and disposal of hazardous waste	10 years	shred
Plant and equipment testing	2 years	shred
Risk Assessment forms	2 years	shred