

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne Parish Council

Data Retention and Disposal Policy

May 2023

1 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 UK General Data Protection Regulation / 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 Aims and Objectives

2.1 It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work that the Council do and the services that it provides to its 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 UK General Data Protection Regulation / Data Protection Act 2018, 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 archival 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, 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 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.
- Personnel information will be retained in locked filing cabinets within the Parish Clerk/ Responsible Finance Officer's office, access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel.

- Disclosure information will be retained in a locked cabinet in the Parish Clerk's 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.
- Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes e.g. Equalities data.
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personnel information will be retained and that will be held within the Parish Clerk's Office.

5 Breach of Policy and Standards

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

6 Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Parish Clerk has overall responsibility for the policy.

6.2 The Parish 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 Parish 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' (i.e., whether they are normal waste or 'Confidential Waste').

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 as Confidential under the Councils Constitution 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 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 appertaining 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.

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 Parish Clerk/ Responsible Finance Officer.

11 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 who 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 Personnel information will only be available to those who are authorised officers.

11.3 Customers details and information will be kept up to date and reviewed annually by an authorised Officer.

12 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 Parish Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer the employee must be given a reason why this information is being shared.

Appendix A

Recommended Document Retention Timescales: This list is not exhaustive; if you are unsure about any document, contact the Parish Clerk for clarification.

Finance

Document	Retention Period
Financial Published Final Accounts/Annual Return	Indefinitely
Final Account working papers	6 years
Records of all accounting transactions held by the Financial Management System	6 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	Until invoice paid
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
Financial Plan	Indefinitely
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	6 years
Cancelled Expenditure cheques	6 years
Bank Reconciliation	Indefinitely
Cheques presented / drawn on the Council bank accounts	6 years
Prime records that money has been correctly recorded in the Councils financial systems	6 years
Grant/Funding Applications & Claims	6 years
Precept Forms	Indefinitely
Internal Audit Plans/ Reports	3 years
Fees and Charges Schedules	6 years
Time sheets and overtime claims	6 years
Payroll and tax information relating to employees and councillors	6 years
Payroll costing analysis	2 years
Records of payment made to employees for salaries / wages (including intermediate payslips)	6 years
Statutory end of year returns to Inland Revenue and 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 indefinitely Insurance records and claims	Indefinitely
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand	6 years from completion of contract
Final accounts of contracts executed under seal	12 years from completion of contract
All Other reconciliations	3 years
Investments	6 years
Contracts	6 years

Personnel

Unsuccessful application forms	6 months
Successful application forms and CV's	For duration of employment + 6 years
References received	For duration of employment + 6 years
Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.	For duration of employment + 6 years
Unpaid leave/special leave	For duration of employment + 6 years
Annual appraisal/assessment records	For duration of employment + 6 years
Time control	3 years
Criminal Records Information: - criminal records requirement assessments for a particular post - criminal records information forms - the Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) check forms - DBS certificates	Criminal records requirement assessments for a particular post – 12 months after the assessment was last used All other information in this category- as soon as practicable after the check has been completed and the outcome recorded (i.e. whether satisfactory or not) unless in exceptional circumstances the data protection officer assesses that it is clearly relevant to the ongoing employment relationship in which case 6 months. If the data protection officer considers it necessary to keep the information for longer than 6 months, then the DBS should be consulted.
Personnel files and training records including Employment contracts	For duration of employment + 6 years
Copies of identification documents (e.g. passports)	For duration of employment + 6 years
Employee performance records, including: Probationary period reviews Review meeting and assessment reviews Appraisal and evaluations Promotions and demotions	For duration of employment + 6 years
Disciplinary or grievance investigations – proved and unproved	For duration of employment + 6 years
Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc	For duration of employment + 6 years
Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc	For duration of employment + 6 years

Identification documents of foreign nationals including right to work	For duration of employment + 6 years
Records of return-to-work meetings following sickness, maternity etc.	For duration of employment + 6 years
Records concerning a temporary worker	For duration of employment + 6 years

Corporate

Minutes and reports of Committee meetings inc. Extraordinary Committee meetings and sub-committees	Indefinitely
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed
Risk register	Indefinitely
Risk management schedule	Indefinitely
Performance reports	Indefinitely
Equalities data	Indefinitely
Questionnaire and Petition data	Indefinitely
Allotment waiting list	While still current (updated yearly)
Land Hire Agreement Applications	6 years
Successful tender documentation	Life of contract + 6 years
Unsuccessful tender documentation	Until decision is made on successful applicant
Deeds of land and property	Indefinitely
Lease agreements, variation, and valuation queries	6 years after the expiry of the agreement
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years
Booking form for Bokesbourne with Patricxbourne House meeting room: Free Use	Until event finished/no longer required by applicant
Booking form for Bokesbourne with Patricxbourne House meeting room: Paid Use	Until event finished/no longer required by applicant

Health & Safety

Health & Safety Accident Books	3 years after the date of the last entry (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained)
Medical records containing details of employees 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 21 st birthday
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years
External Health & Safety recommendations	Indefinite/archived
All inspection certificates (Gas Safe, FENSA etc)	2 years

Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)	2 years
Warranties	While still valid
Documents related 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

Additional Items

Agendas and Approved Minutes	Indefinite
Draft/Rough notes taken at meeting	Until minutes are approved
Councillor records	6 years after termination of Council
Co-opted members on council committee contact details	While still current
Councillor declaration of acceptance of office	Indefinite/archived
Co-opted members declarations of acceptance of office	Indefinite/archived
Complaints received from members of the public, local authorities and organisations	5 years (4 years current council +1)
Correspondence received from members of the public, local authorities and organisations	As long as is useful
Local organisations and Tradesmen contact details	While still current
Freedom of Information requests and subsequent paperwork	5 years (4 years current council +1)
Consultations	5 years (4 years current council +1)