

Norton On Derwent Town Council

Document Retention Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 In the course of carrying out its various functions and activities, the Council collects information from individuals and external organisations and generates a wide range of data/information which is recorded. These records can take many different forms.

- Letters received from third parties
- Copy letters which have been sent out
- File attendance notes
- Invoices
- Completed application forms
- Plans/drawings
- Financial records
- Registers
- Contracts/deeds
- E-mail communications, and any attachments
- Photographs
- Tape recordings

1.2 Many of the above documents can be retained as 'hard' paper records or in electronic form.

1.3 Retention of specific documents may be necessary to:

- Fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements
- Evidence events/agreements in case of disputes
- Meet operational needs
- Ensure the preservation of documents of historic or other value

1.4 The untimely destruction of documents could cause the Council:

- Difficulty in defending litigious claims
- Operational problems
- Embarrassment
- Failure to comply with the Freedom of Information Act or the General Data Protection Act.

1.5 Conversely, the permanent retention of all documents is undesirable, and appropriate disposal is to be encouraged for the following reasons:

- There is a shortage of new storage space
- Disposal of existing storage space can free up space for more productive activities
- Indefinite retention of personal data may be unlawful
- Reduction of fire risk
- Decluttering can be psychologically beneficial

1.6 Modern day records management philosophy emphasises the importance of organisations having in place systems for the timely and secure disposal of documents / records that are no longer required for business purposes. Additionally the freedom of information act will make it important that the Council has clearly defined policies and procedures in place for disposing of records, and that these are well documented

2. Scope and Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a corporate policy framework to govern decisions on whether a particular document (or set of documents) should either be:

- Retained – in what format and for what period, or
- Disposed of – if so when and by what method

3. Retention Period & Reasons

3.1 The retention periods for the different types of documentation and information held is set out in the table below, also the reason for retention given therein

3.2 In the event a decision is taken to dispose of a particular document or set of documents in accordance with the table below, consideration should be given to the method of disposal as set out below:

4. Method of Disposal

4.1 Disposal can be achieved by a range of processes:

- Confidential waste – i.e. making available for collection by a designated refuse collection service.
- Physical destruction on site – i.e. shredding paper records
- Deletion – where computer files are concerned
- Migration of document to external body

Retention of documents table for Norton on Derwent Town Council

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Minute books	Indefinite	Archive
Scale of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Receipt and payment account(s)	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Bank statements, including deposit and savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and Tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages books	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	While valid	Management

Certificates for Insurance against liability for employees	40 years from the date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (Sl. 2753), Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members allowances register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
For Recreation Grounds, Halls & Centres		
Application to hire	6 years	VAT
Lettings diaries	6 years	VAT
Copies of bills to hires	6 years	VAT
Record of tickets issued	6 years	VAT
For Allotments		
Register and Plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management
For Burial Grounds		
Register of fees collected	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (Sl. 204)
Register of burials	Indefinite	Archives, LACO 1977 as above
Register of purchased graves	Indefinite	Archives, LACO 1977 as above
Register / plan of grave spaces	Indefinite	Archives, LACO 1977 as above
Register of memorials	Indefinite	Archives, LACO 1977 as above
Applications for interment	Indefinite	Archives, LACO 1977 as above
Applications for right to erect memorials	Indefinite	Archives, LACO 1977 as above
Disposal certificates	Indefinite	Archives, LACO 1977 as above
Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial	Indefinite	Archives, LACO 1977 as above
For Planning Documentation		
Planning papers from District Authority	10 years	To allow effluxion of time for appeals, developments etc
Planning reference from planning papers	Indefinite	To create permanent record
Information from other bodies		
County Associations, NALC, SLCC, principal bodies	Undefined	For as long as is useful and relevant
Magazines and Journals	Undefined	For as long as is useful and relevant
Staffing		
Documentation relating to staff	Not longer than is necessary for the purpose it was held – 6 months if a claim / proceedings etc	To comply with the General Data Protection Regulation
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages and PAYE records	12 years	Superannuation / HMRC inspection

Personnel Files	3 years after employment terminated	Management
Interview Records	6 months	Up to 6 months, or for as long as useful and relevant
Public		
Public Email & Public Letter	6 months	Up to 6 months, or until matter dealt with.

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