



Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy

Full Council Approved: 2nd October 2024
Due for next Review: 2nd October 2027

Fleet Town Council acknowledges the critical importance of efficient records management to meet legal and regulatory obligations and to ensure the effective overall management of the Council. This policy establishes the framework for the consistent and compliant management of records.

Objectives

- 1. Legal Compliance**
Ensure compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Freedom of Information Act, and Human Rights legislation.
- 2. Appropriate Retention**
Retain records for the appropriate length of time to meet legal, financial, and operational requirements.
- 3. Consistency in Management**
Provide a consistent and standardized approach to records management across the Council.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all records created, received, or maintained by the Council in the course of its functions, irrespective of format, including both hard copy and electronic records.

Responsibilities

- **Council Responsibility:**
The Council has a corporate obligation to manage its records and record management systems in compliance with the regulatory environment. The Executive Officer of the Council holds ultimate responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
- **Executive Officer and Councillors:**
The Executive Officer and Councillors must ensure the accuracy and proper maintenance of records within their purview, adhering to the Council's records management guidelines. Records containing personal data must not be retained longer than necessary.

- **Email Correspondence:**
All Council-related email correspondence must be conducted through official Council email addresses. Emails should be retained only as long as they are useful, with a maximum retention period of 6 months unless a valid reason for extended retention exists.

Archiving and Destruction

Given the impracticality of retaining all information indefinitely, the Council adheres to its Records Retention Policy, which mandates the following:

- **Simultaneous Destruction:**
Backup copies stored on alternative media must be destroyed concurrently with the original record.
- **Multimedia Consistency:**
Information held on multiple media, including the website, must be destroyed simultaneously.
- **Confidentiality:**
Confidential or sensitive data must be securely shredded upon destruction.
- **Routine Disposal:**
Duplicated, unimportant, or short-term records should be destroyed as part of regular business operations.
- **Email Management:**
Electronic mailboxes must be routinely reviewed, with emails retained for no longer than 6 months.

Record Type	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION			
Signed minutes of Council & Committee meetings	Permanent	Archive	Original signed paper copies of Council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than 5 years they must be archived and deposited with the Higher Authority.
Reports considered by Council & Committees	Permanent	Archive	N/A
Agenda papers not including confidential	5 years	Management	Recycle
Agenda papers confidential	5 years	Management	Confidential waste
Notes taken to compile minutes	Destroy once minutes approved	Management	Confidential waste
Draft documents	Destroy once final version has been approved	Management	Recycle
Routine correspondence hard copy & email	Retain as long as useful	Management	Recycle
Request under FOI Act	5 years	Management	Confidential waste
Complaints	5 years after closure of case	Management	Confidential waste
Publications received incl. magazines & journals, reports from other bodies	Retain as long as useful and relevant	Management	Recycle
Information from other bodies e.g., circulars from county associations, NALC, principal authorities	Retain for as long as it is useful and relevant	Management	Recycle

MEMBERS			
Register of interests	18 months after individual ceases to be a member	Management	Confidential waste
Members' Declarations of Interest	Permanent (noted in minutes)	Management	N/A
Dispensations under Localism Act 2012	Permanent (noted in minutes)	Management	N/A
Members allowance register	6 years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980	Confidential waste
FINANCE			
Annual Return & Year End Accounts	6 years	VAT/audit	Recycle
Financial ledgers – receipts & payments	6 years	VAT/audit	Recycle
Receipt books	6 years	VAT/audit	Recycle
Copy invoices (sales)	6 years	VAT/audit	Recycle
Paid invoices (purchases)	6 years	VAT/audit	Recycle
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980	Confidential waste
Bank Statements including deposit/savings account	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
Bank paying in books	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
Budget	Permanent (with minutes)	Archive	N/A
Budgetary preparation papers	2 years + current	Audit	Recycle
Budgetary monitoring/control papers	2 years + current	Audit	Recycle
Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management	Recycle
Payroll submissions and reports	12 years	Superannuation	Confidential waste
Timesheets	3 years	Audit	Confidential waste
Petty cash records	6 years	VAT	Recycle

Record Type	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Audit reports– internal & external	6 years	Audit	Recycle
VAT records	6 years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT	Confidential waste
Quotations & tenders	6 years	Limitations Act 1980	Confidential Waste
Investments	Indefinite	Audit/Management	N/A
Payroll Files	12 years	Superannuation	Confidential waste
INSURANCE			
Insurance Policy & Records	While valid (see next two items below)	Management	Recycle
Certificate of Employer's Liability	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	Legal requirement The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI 2753) Management	Recycle
Claims records & correspondence	7 years after all obligations are concluded	Legal requirement	Recycle
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	N/A
HUMAN RESOURCES			
Personal files (not including payroll)	6 years after cease employment	Management	Confidential waste
Application forms (unsuccessful)	1 month if not shortlisted 3 months those shortlisted	Management	Confidential waste

Grievance & Disciplinary Records	Retain for period of employment	Management	Confidential waste
Performance Development	5 years or period of employment	Management	Confidential waste
Records relating to employment tribunal	The Employment Tribunals (Constitution and Rules of Procedure) (Amendment) Regulations 2008; Limitation Act 1980 (Section 2)	12 months	Confidential waste
PROPERTY & LEGAL			
Asset Register	Permanent	Audit & Management	N/A
Leases (where FTC is lessee) & copies of land register	Permanent	Archive	N/A
Leases (where lessor)	6 years after expiry of lease	Management	Confidential waste
Asset management records (inventories etc.)	2 years	Management	Recycle
Service records of equipment	7 years after disposal	Management	Recycle
S106 Agreements	Permanent	Archive	N/A
Contract Documentation including quotation and/or tender	6 years after completion	Limitation Act 1980	Confidential waste
Unsuccessful quotes/tenders	2 years	Audit	Confidential waste
Title deeds, agreements, and related contracts	Permanent	Audit/Management	N/A
FACILITIES			
Hire Agreements including terms and conditions	6 years	Management	Confidential waste
Lettings Records	6 years	VAT	Confidential waste
Copy Invoices (as finance above)	6 years	VAT/Audit	Confidential waste
Playground inspections and assessments	21 years	Audit/Management	Confidential waste
Event Monitoring Forms	6 years unless used in a claim, in insurance or for legal purpose (see Insurance; Claims records and correspondence)	Management	Confidential waste
Maps plans and surveys of property owned by the Council or meeting	Permanent	Transfer to Hampshire archives as soon as there is no longer an administrative requirement	Hampshire Archives

HEALTH & SAFETY			
Equipment Inspection Records	6 years from disposal of equipment	Statutory	Recycle
Premises Inspection Records	6 years from disposal of equipment	Management	Recycle
Accident Record Books	20 years from closure of book	Potential claims	Confidential waste
Risk Assessments	3 years	Management	Recycle
PLANNING			
Applications	1 year	Held by planning authority Management	Recycle
Appeals	1 year unless significant development	Management	Recycle
Council comments	Not retained separately – Permanent (in minutes)	Held by planning authority	N/A
Trees	1 year	Management	Recycle
Local Development Plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Recycle
PUBLIC RELATIONS			
Council publications – newsletters/leaflets	Permanent current year + 6	Archive	Hampshire Archives
Press Releases	6 years – current year + 6	Archive	Hampshire Archives
Local/Historical Information	Indefinite- to be kept securely for benefit of the parish	Councils may acquire records of local interest and accept gifts or records of general and local interest in order to promote the use for such records (defined as materials in written or other form setting out facts or events or otherwise recording information).	Hampshire Archives

RECORD KEEPING			
To ensure records are easily accessible it is necessary to comply with the following: • A list of files stored in cabinets will be kept • Electronic files will be saved using relevant file names	The electronic files will be backed up periodically on a portable hard drive and in the cloud-based programme supplied by the Council's IT company.	Management	Confidential waste
General correspondence	Unless it relates to specific categories outlined in the policy, correspondence, both paper and electronic, should be kept as long as they are needed for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests	Management	Confidential waste
Documents from legal matters, negligence, and other torts. Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. Where the limitation periods are longer than other periods specified the documentation should be kept for the longer period specified. Some types of legal proceedings may fall within two or more categories. If in doubt, keep for the longest of the three limitation periods			
Negligence	6 years		Confidential waste
Defamation	1 year		Confidential waste
Sums recoverable by statute	6 years		Confidential waste
Trust deeds	Indefinite		N/A
CEMETERY			
Register of fees collected	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI.204)	N/A
Register of burials	Indefinite	As above	
Register of purchased graves	Indefinite	As above	
Register/plan of grave spaces	Indefinite	As above	

Register of memorials	Indefinite	As above	
Applications for interment	Indefinite	As above	
Applications for right to erect memorials	Indefinite	As above	
Disposal certificates	Indefinite	As above	
Copy certificates to grant of exclusive right of burial	Indefinite	As above	
General documents	No minimum -destroy after 2 years	Management	Confidential waste