



Documentation Retention Policy

This policy was adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 13 April 2023 and was last reviewed at its meeting held on 10 April 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The guidelines set out in this document supports the Council Data Protection Policy and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) 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 does 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 Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the GDPR.
 - Save time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.
 - 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 policy, '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 of good practice

- 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.
 - Personal information will be retained in the cloud, in secure, access-restricted electronic files.

- Disclosure information will be retained in the cloud, in secure, access-restricted electronic files.
- 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 eg. Equalities data.
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information will be retained and that will be held in the cloud, in secure, access-restricted electronic files.

5. Breach of Policy and Standards

- 5.1. Where there is a breach of the policy, the Council may need to consider whether there is also a breach of the GDPR.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1. The Council has responsibility for implementation of the policy and is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.

7. Retention

- 7.1. Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements, guidance from the National Association of Local Councils and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Professional Development (CIPD).
- 7.2. Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place.
- 7.3. The attached 'Appendix' shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by the Council for the management of specific 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'.

8. Disposal

- 8.1 Documents/data no longer required by the Council for administrative purposes must be finely shredded/disposed of through specialist waste removal contractors and deleted entirely and securely from the Council's computer system(s).

APPENDIX A

Document Retention Timescales

Document	Retention Period
Finance	
Financial Published Final Accounts	Indefinitely
Annual Governance and Accountability Return	Indefinitely
Final Account working papers	6 years
Records of all accounting transactions held in the financial management system	At least 6 years
Cash Books (records of monies paid out and received)	12 years
Purchase Orders	6 years
Cheque Payment Listings (Invoices received)	6 years
Payment Vouchers Capital and Revenue (copy invoices)	12 years
Goods received notes, advice notes and delivery notes	3 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
Adopted annual budget	6 years
Financial Plan	6 years
Budget Estimates – Detailed Working Papers and summaries	3 years
Bank Statements (electronic) and Instructions to banks	6 years
Bank Statements (Hardcopy)	6 years
Prime evidence that money has been banked	6 years
Refer to Drawer (RD) cheques	3 years
Cancelled Expenditure cheques	3 years
Bank Reconciliation	3 years
Cheques presented/drawn on the Council bank accounts	3 years
Grant/Funding Applications & Claims	3 years
Precept Forms	Indefinitely
Internal Audit Plans/Reports	3 years
Fees and Charges Schedules	6 years
Loans and Investment Records; temporary loan receipts	10 years (after redemption of loan)
Current and expired insurance contracts and policies and Insurance records	3 years
Claims correspondence	3 years after settlement
Employers Liability Insurance Certificate	40 years
VAT records, input and output	10 years
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand or seal	12 years from completion of contract

<u>Corporate</u>	
Councillors Registers of Interests	When councillor is no longer a public office holder
Councillors Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms	When councillor is no longer a public office holder
Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office	When the term of office comes to an end
Minutes of all meetings	Permanently (in perpetuity) and archived after 2 years
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed
Asset management records	Indefinitely
Internal audit fraud investigation	7 years from date of final outcome of investigation
Risk register	Indefinitely
Risk assessments (any)	6 years
Pre-tender qualification document, summary list of expression of interest received, 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 from date of final payment
Unsuccessful tender documentation	Until final payment of contract let is made
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years

<u>Health & Safety</u>	
Health and Safety Accident books and records	3 years after the date of the last entry (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained within then 40 years). If the accident concerns a child or young adult retain until the person reaches the age of 21.
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
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years
Parks and play area inspection reports	6 years
All inspection certificates	6 years
Repairs job sheets	2 years
Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)	2 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
Unusual Incident Forms	3 years
Manual Handling Assessment Forms	3 years

<u>Other</u>	
Hard copy routine correspondence	File management – retain until matter dealt with; maximum period 6 months. Where Darrington Parish Council believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will redact personal data from the correspondence.
Electronic routine correspondence	File management – retain until matter dealt with; maximum period 6 months. Where Darrington Parish Council believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will redact personal data from the correspondence.
Requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000	File management – retain until matter dealt with; maximum period 6 months. Where Darrington Parish Council believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will redact personal data from the correspondence.
Planning Applications	<p>Recommendations in connection with relevant planning applications are recorded in the minutes which are retained indefinitely. Correspondence (both hard copy and electronic) received in connection with planning applications will be retained in accordance with the routine documents/correspondence policy noted above.</p> <p>Where an application is refused by the local planning authority, the application will be retained until the period within which an appeal can be made has expired.</p>

Agreements and related correspondence	
Contracts with customers and suppliers	Six years after expiry or termination of contract
Licensing agreements, Rental/Hire Purchase agreements	Six years is generally the time limit within which proceedings founded on a contract may be brought
Indemnities and guarantees	If the contract is executed as a deed the limitation period is twelve years
Other agreements and contracts	Actions for latent damage may be brought up to fifteen years after the damage occurs

<u>Donations and Subscription Records</u>	
Donations granted and related correspondence	Six years
Deed of covenant	Six years after last payment made but up to 12 years if any payments are still outstanding or there is any dispute regarding the Deed
Subscription records	3 years after cessation of membership