



North Horsham Parish Council

DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS RETENTION POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council recognises the need to retain documentation for audit purposes, staff management, tax liabilities, and the eventuality of legal disputes and proceedings.
- 1.2 In agreeing a document retention scheme, the Council has addressed these needs, and taken into account its obligations under the Local Government Act 1972, the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Public Records Act 1958, the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998, the Limitation Act 1980, the Employments Rights Act 1996, the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records Code 2002, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 1.3 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 that it will be updated on a regular basis.
- 1.4 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 vital to support the work that the Council do and the services that it provides to residents. This document will help the Council 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.
 - 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 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

- 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.
 - Personal information will be retained in locked filing cabinets within the Clerk's Office and/or the Deputy Clerk's office, access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel.
 - Disclosure information will be retained in a locked cabinet in the 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 personal information will be retained and that will be held within the 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 Clerk has overall responsibility for the policy.
- 6.2 The Clerk is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.
- 6.3 Other delegated staff are responsible for ensuring their records are kept and destroyed in line with this policy.
- 6.4 The Clerk 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 using the shredder in the Reception 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 Clerk, and/or the Deputy Clerk.

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 whom 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 Personal 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 Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and the direct Manager the employee must be given a reason why this information is being shared.

13. Reviewing and Monitoring the Policy

13.1 The Clerk shall be responsible for reviewing this policy every two years or sooner if appropriate to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

The next review is due March 2027

APPENDIX A

Recommended Document Retention Timescales

This list is not exhaustive; if you are unsure about any document contact the Parish Clerk or Deputy Clerk for clarification.

Document Retention Period

Finance

Document	Retention Period
Financial Published Final Accounts	Indefinitely
Signed Audited Accounts	Indefinitely
Final Account working papers	6 years
Records of all accounting transactions held by the Financial Management System	At least 6 years
Cash Books (records of monies paid out and received)	7 years
Bank paying in books and cheque stubs	7 years
Invoices Capital and Revenue	7 years
BACS listings	7 years
Goods received notes, advice notes and delivery notes attached to invoice	7 years
Petty cash vouchers and reimbursement claims	7 years
Debtors and rechargeable works records	7 years
Expenses and travel allowance claims	7 years
Asset Register for statutory accounting purposes	11 years
Journal records	7 years
Ledger / Trial Balance	11 years
Year end ledger tabulations – ledger details and cost updates	6 years
Published Budget Books	Indefinitely
Financial Plan	Indefinitely
Budget Estimates – Detailed Working Papers and summaries	4 years
Bank Statement and Instructions to banks	7 years
Banking Records including Giro cheques, bills of exchange and other negotiable instruments	7 years
Refer to Drawer (RD) cheques	3 years
Cancelled Expenditure cheques	3 years
Bank Reconciliation	4 years
Cheques presented / drawn on the Council bank accounts	4 years
Prime records that money has been correctly recorded in the Councils financial systems	4 years
Grant/Funding Applications & Claims	6 years
Precept Forms	Indefinitely
Internal Audit Plans/ Reports	4 years
Fees and Charges Schedules	7 years

Overtime claims	7 years
Payroll and tax information relating to employees	7 years
Payroll costing analysis	3 years
Records of payment made to employees for salaries / wages (including intermediate payslips)	7 years
Statutory end of year returns to Inland Revenue and Pensions Section	Indefinitely
Loans and Investment Records; temporary loan receipts and loan tabulations	7 years (after redemption of loan)
VAT, Income Tax and National Insurance Records	7 years
Current and expired insurance contracts and policies indefinitely Insurance records and claims	7years
Capital and contracts register	Indefinitely
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand	7 years from completion of contract
Final accounts of contracts executed under seal	13 years from completion of contract
All Other reconciliations	4 years
Quotations and tenders	7 years
Paid invoices	7 years
Investments	Indefinitely

Personnel

Unsuccessful application forms	1 month
Unsuccessful reference requests	1 month
Successful applications forms and CVs	For duration of employment + 1 year
References received	For duration of employment + 1 year
Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.	For duration of employment + 6 years
Annual leave records	For duration of employment + 1 year
Unpaid leave/special leave	For duration of employment + 1 year
Annual appraisal/assessment records	Current year and previous 2 years
DBS Checks	In line with policy.
Personnel files and training records	2 years after employment ceases
Disciplinary or grievance investigations – proved.	In line with policy.
Disciplinary or grievance investigations - unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal
Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc	3 years after the tax year in which the maternity period ended
Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc	6 years
Timesheets	1 year
Members Allowances register	6 years

Members file of records	For duration of office
Member's Declarations of Interest	For duration of office.
List of serving Members	Indefinitely

Corporate

Minutes and reports of Council Meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports of Committee meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports for Special Committee meetings	Indefinitely
Minutes and reports of sub-committees	Indefinitely
Notes and reports of working groups	Indefinitely
Rough notes taken at meetings	Until the minutes/ notes have been approved.
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed
Asset Management records	Indefinitely
Asset management reports	Indefinitely
Insurance policies	Whilst valid
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	40 years
Internal audit records	3 years
Internal audit fraud investigation	7 years from date of final outcome of investigation
Risk register	Indefinitely
Risk management reports	Indefinitely
Published performance reports	Indefinitely
Published Equalities data	Indefinitely
Published questionnaire data	Indefinitely
Allotment application forms	Length of Tenancy + 2 years
Allotment agreements	Length of Tenancy + 2 years
Hall health & safety statements	2 Years
Hall bookings forms	6 years
Paper planning applications	6 months
CCTV footage	30 days then overwritten
Deeds of land and property	Indefinitely
Land and property rental agreements	6 years after expiry of the agreement
Property evaluation lists	Indefinitely
Lease agreements, variation and valuation queries	6 years after the expiry of the agreement
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years
Booking diaries	3 years
Electronic booking information Is held in the system indefinitely due to the need to gather statistical information	
Premises License applications	Indefinitely

Health & Safety

Health and Safety Accident books	3 years after the date of the last entry (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained within)
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
Records relating to accidents person over 18 years	3 years from date of accident
Records relating to accidents person under 18 years	Until 21st birthday
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years
Parks and play area inspection reports	5 years
All inspection certificates (Gas Safe, FENSA etc)	2 years
Repairs job sheets	2 years
Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)	2 years
Warranties	10 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
Risk Assessment Forms	2 years
Unusual Incident Forms	3 years
Manual Handling Assessment Forms	3 years