



DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 Certain documents should be retained 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 the need and taken into account its obligations. If in doubt, document(s) should be retained until legal advice has been received. Where the policy refers to 'documents' this includes both paper and electronic copies.

2. Retention of Documents for Legal Purposes

2.1 Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). This Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. The specified period varies, depending on the type of claim in question. The table below sets out the limitation periods for the different categories of claim.

Category	Limitation Period
Negligence (and other torts)	6 Years
Defamation	1 Year
Contract	6 Years
Leases	12 Years
Sums recoverable by statute	6 Years
Personal Injury	3 Years
To recover land	12 years
Rent	6 Years
Breach of Trust	None

2.2 Some types of legal proceedings may fall into two or more categories. In these circumstances the documentation should be kept for the longest of the differing limitation periods.

2.3 As there is no limitation period in respect of trusts, the Council will never destroy trust deeds and schemes and other similar documentation.

2.4 Some limitation periods can be extended. Examples include:

- where individuals first become aware of damage caused at a later date (e.g. in the case of personal injury).
- where damage is latent (e.g. to a building);
- where a person suffers from a mental incapacity;
- where there has been a mistake or where one party has defrauded another or concealed relevant facts.

2.5 In such circumstances, the Council will weigh up (i) the costs of storing relevant documents and the (ii) risks of:

- claims being made;
- the value of the claims; and

- the inability to defend any claims made should relevant documentation be destroyed.

3. Document Retention Schedule

3.1 The Council has agreed a minimum document retention schedule based on its obligations under the relevant Acts, Codes, Orders and Regulations.

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
Minute book	Indefinite	Archive
Scale of fees and Charges	6 Years	Management
Receipt/Payment Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
All receipt books	6 Years	VAT/Audit
All Bank Statements including savings/deposit 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 after completion of contract	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	6 years <i>generally but 20 years for VAT on rents</i>	VAT, tax
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	VAT, tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Timesheets	Last completed audit year	Audit
Wages books	12 years	Superannuation
Insurance policies	While valid	Management & legal proceedings
Certificate for insurance against liability for employees	Indefinitely	Future claims
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members Allowance Register	6 Years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Personnel records	6 years after employment terminates	Recommended Practice
Recruitment paperwork	1 year for all except successful candidate	Recommended Practice
Accident books/reports	3 years or if a young person until they reach the age of 21.	Reporting of injuries, diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Act 2013, RIDDOR (SI.1995/3163)
Correspondence and emails	1 year	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)



Annual accounts and asset registers	Indefinite	Archive
Formal Complaints made under the Council's complaint procedure.	6 years	Management
Freedom of Information Requests Received	6 years	Management
Previous versions of policies, standing orders, schemes of delegation	3 years	Data Protection Act 2018
Room/venue hire:- Booking forms Letting diary Copies of bills/invoices to hirers	6 Years	VAT
For allotments (if applicable) Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management

3.2 The need to retain any documents not included in the above schedule should be considered on an individual basis. As a guide, and in the absence of any prevailing Act, Code, Oder or Regulation to the contrary, documents may be destroyed if they are no longer of use or relevant. If in doubt advice should be sought from the Town Clerk.

4. Disposal

4.1 As per the Council's Data Protection Policy and the Data Protection Act 2018, any document which contains data on an individual(s) or personal data will be disposed of confidentially via shredding in the Council offices.

4.2 Any Councillors wishing to dispose of paper copies of confidential Council documentation will do so via shredding in the Council offices.



Policy	Document Retention
Review Cycle	Every 3 years, or earlier in the event of legislative changes
Date Last Adopted	November 2023
Previous Adoption Dates	November 2020 November 2017
Responsibility	Policy & Resources Committee and then adoption by Full Council