



Heanor and Loscoe Town Council

Document Retention and Disposal Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Town Council accumulates a vast amount of information and data during the course of its everyday activities. This includes data generated internally in addition to information obtained from individuals and external organisations. This information is recorded in various types of document.
- 1.2 Records created and maintained by the Town Council are an important asset and as such measures need to be undertaken to safeguard this information. properly managed records provide authentic and reliable evidence of the Town Council's transactions and are necessary to ensure it can demonstrate accountability.
- 1.3 Documents may be retained in either 'hard' paper form or in electronic forms. for the purpose of this policy, 'document' and 'record' refers to both hard copy and electronic records.
- 1.4 It is imperative that documents are retained for an adequate period of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely, the Town Council could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Town Council.
- 1.5 In contrast to the above, the Town Council should not retain documents longer than is necessary. Timely disposal should be undertaken to ensure compliance with current legislation so that personal information is not retained longer than necessary. This will also ensure the most efficient use of limited storage.

2. Scope and Objectives of the Policy

2.1 The aim of this document is to provide a working framework to determine which documents are:

Retained - and how long for: or

Disposed of - and if so by what method.

Security of documents - methods for both the Town Council and Councillors

2.2 There are some records which do not need to be kept at all or that are routinely destroyed in the course of business. This usually applies to information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of a short term-value.

2.3 Records should not be destroyed if the information can be used as evidence to prove that something has happened.

3. Roles and Responsibility for Document Retention and Disposal

3.1 Councils are responsible for determining whether to retain or dispose of documents and should undertake a review of documentation on an annual basis to ensure that any unnecessary documentation being held is disposed of.

4. Document Retention Period

4.1 Councils are required to maintain their records in accordance with legislation and the Clerk to the Town Council is required to manage the Council's records in such a way as it promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner.

4.2 Councils are required to maintain a retention schedule. The retention schedule below provides guidance on the recommended retention periods for specific classes of documents and records.

4.3 Whenever there is a possibility of litigation, the records and information which are likely to be affected should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed.

5. Document Disposal Protocol

5.1 Documents should only be disposed of if reviewed in accordance with the following:

- Is retention required to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements?
- Is retention required to meet the operational needs of the service?
- Is retention required to evidence events in the case of dispute?
- Is retention required because the document or record is of historic interest or intrinsic value?

5. Document Disposal Protocol (cont)

5.2 When documents are scheduled for disposal the method of disposal should be appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the documents concerned.

5.3 Documents can be disposed of by any of the following methods:

- Non confidential records: place in waste paper bin for disposal
- Confidential records: shred documents
- Deletion of computer records
- Transmission of records to an external body such as the County Records Office.

6. Review of Document Retention

6.1 It is planned to review, update and where appropriate amend this document annually.

7. Documents

7.1 For a list of Council documents and the procedures for retention or disposal please see Appendix 1.

8. Security

8.1 The Town Council will need to ensure that all data (hard copy or electronic) is kept securely and access is available only to authorised personnel.

8.2 Councillors will need to assess how they manage the data they receive or generate on behalf of the Town Council and identify potential weaknesses.

Appendix 1

Document	Type	Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Minutes	H/E	Indefinite	Archive	n/a
Agendas	H	1 year	Management	Bin
Accident/incident reports	H/E	20 years	Legal	CW
Scale of Fees and Charges	H/E	1 year	Management	Bin
Annual Accounts	H/E	Indefinite	Archive	n/a
Receipt Books	H	Last completed audit year	Audit	CW
Bank Statements	H	Last completed Audit year	Audit	CW
Bank Paying In Books	H	Last completed Audit year	Audit	CW
Cheque Book Stubs	H	Last completed Audit year	Audit	CW
Quotations and Tenders	H	7 years	Audit	CW
Paid and Issued Invoices	H	7 years	VAT/Audit	CW
VAT Records	H	7 years	VAT/Audit	CW
Salary Records	H/E	7 years	Tax/Audit	CW
Insurance Policies	H/E	Whilst valid	Management	Bin
Certificate of Insurance	H/E	40 years	Audit/Legal	Bin
Playground inspection reports	H/E	Indefinite	Legal	n/a
Deeds, Leases, Contracts and Agreements	H/E	Indefinite	Audit Management	n/a
DALC/SLCC Circulars	H/E	1 year	Management	Bin
Magazines and Journals	H	As long as relevant	Management	Bin
Timesheets	H	Last completed Audit year	Audit	CW
Halls - Applications to Hire, Lettings Diaries	H	6	VAT	CW
Allotment Plans	H	Indefinite	Audit Management	n/a
Planning applications	H	As long as Relevant	Management	Bin
Correspondence				
General	H/E	1 year	Management	CW/bin
Staff	H/E	3 years	Management	CW/bin

Key

H = hard copy

E - electronic copy

CW - confidential waste