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# **RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY**

**December, 2025**

## **1. Code of Practice on the Management of Records**

Under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Code of Practice on the management of records), it is recommended that the Council should adopt the following practice in respect of the retention, management and disposal of the Council's documents and records.

Good records and information management benefits those requesting information because it provides some assurance that the information provided will be complete and reliable. It benefits those holding the requested information because it enables them to locate and retrieve it easily within the statutory timescales or to explain why it is not held. It also supports control and delivery of information promised in the Council's Publication Scheme or required to be published by the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (the EIR), under the General Data Protection Regulation (which comes into force on 25 May 2018) and in accordance with Standing Orders (Section 20 refers).

## **2. Good practice in records management is made up of a number of key elements:**

- The Council should have in place a formal records management policy, with organisational arrangements in place to support that policy.
- The Council should ensure it keeps the records it needs for business, regulatory, legal and accountability purposes.
- Records should be kept in systems that enable the records to be stored and retrieved as necessary.
- The Council should know what records it holds, where they are and that they remain usable for as long as they are required (i.e. that they can be retrieved, used and relied upon).
- Records should be stored securely, with access to them controlled.
- The Council should define how long it needs to keep particular records, should dispose of them when they are no longer needed and should be able to explain why records are no longer held (i.e. if they have been disposed of or transferred to a third party).
- Records shared with other bodies or held on their behalf by other bodies should be managed in accordance with the FOIA Code of Practice.
- The Council should monitor compliance with the FOIA Code of Practice and assess the overall effectiveness of the records management policy.
- The policy should be kept up-to-date so that it reflects the current needs of the Council, by reviewing it at agreed intervals, e.g. every year or after major organisational or technological changes.



- The Council should publish the Policy so that members of the public can see the basis on which it manages its records.

### **3. Requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**

As a matter of good practice, the Information Commissioner's Office recommends that any requested information should be kept for at least 6 months after the date of the last communication about the request, to allow for appeals to the Information Commissioner (Source: ICO Practical guidance: Destruction of requested information).

### **4. Anonymous communications**

Any communication received anonymously will be reported to the Council and action taken, if appropriate. Any anonymous letter or e-mail received will then be destroyed.

### **5. Paper Filing and other Systems**

- Records titles used on the Council's paper filing system (housed in suspension files in filing cabinets) should reflect their specific nature and contents, so as to facilitate retrieval.
- Records that are no longer required for frequent reference, but need to be retained indefinitely, should be digitally scanned for easier longer term access, but then 'archived' to The Story, Durham County Council's Archive Service after two years in appropriately labelled archive transfer files.
- Records to be removed from the Council's website after seven years e.g. Minutes (which will still be held electronically and/or in hard copy archived files).
- The Council's records system is documented to facilitate maintenance of the system and reconstruction in the event of an emergency. It also helps the Clerk and Council to know the whereabouts and movement of files, at all times.
- Daily backups are taken of all data on the Council's laptop, with a further backup of all system files/folders taken regularly, i.e. at least once a month.
- Access to data is password protected to ensure the records are stored securely and access to the data is controlled; password details are retained as long as valid.
- All Agenda Supporting Documents (ASD) are to be available for seven years after which they do not need to be retained and will be shredded.

## **6. Disposal of Records**

- In general, records should be kept for as long as they are needed by the Council, for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests.
- Destruction at the end of the period ensures that office and computer space are not used and costs not incurred in maintaining records that are no longer required.
- Any personal data should only be kept for as long as it is needed.
- Once the minimum retention period has passed, records should be destroyed in a rolling programme, taking into account security of the information contained in the records and confidentiality needs.
- The Clerk will be responsible for all disposals and destruction of records, in as secure a manner as required by the level of confidentiality.
- Destruction of all sensitive information will normally be by shredding or incineration.
- Digital records will be over-written to ensure that the data is destroyed completely.
- Details of the destruction of records will be kept by the Clerk, as part of the audit trail.
- If any records are not included in the retention and disposal schedule, the Clerk will be responsible for reviewing the records and deciding whether they can be destroyed or archived for indefinite preservation.
- Such decisions should be documented and kept to provide evidence of which records have been identified for destruction, when the decision was made, and the reasons for the decision, where this is not apparent from the overall policy.
- Ephemeral material should be disposed of on a routine basis, e.g. print-outs of electronic documents should not be kept after the meeting for which they were printed.
- Trivial emails should be deleted immediately after being read.
- Keeping multiple or personal copies of documents should be discouraged.



## Retention and Disposal Schedule

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason
Minutes of the Council	Indefinite	Deposit with DCC Archive Service after 7 years
Agendas & Supporting papers	18 months	For Annual Parish Meeting reference if needed
Informal records of the Council in connection with the preparation of the Minutes	To be destroyed following completion of the relevant Minutes.	
Sign in Sheets	Duration of service	Audit
Policies	Six Years or as long as relevant	Policy reviews to be carried on a yearly basis.
<b>Financial Records</b>		
Assets	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Management Audit & Annual Returns	Indefinite	Archive Service
Grant Applications	7 years	Audit
Receipt Books	7 years	Audit, Management
VAT Returns	7 years	VAT
Insurance Policies	While Valid	Management
Insurance claims	7 years	Audit & Management
Quotations and Tenders	12 years	Statute of Limitations
Title Deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Budget	Indefinite	Archive Service
Precept Demands	Indefinite	Archive Service
Bank Statements	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Paid invoices	7 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage etc	7 years	VAT, Tax & Statute of limitations
Wages	12 years	Superannuation
PAYE/NI Contributions	3 years from the end of year to which the records relate	Audit
Scales of Fees and Charges	6 years	Management

<b>Other</b>		
Members' Interests	Duration of Service	Management
Members' Code of Conduct Matters	Duration of service	Management, Subject access requests
Information from other bodies e.g. circulars, CDALC	Retain for as long as it is useful	Management
Planning applications details, decisions, notices and appeals	Retained on DCC's website or keep for as long as it is useful.	Management
Local Plans	Retain as long as in force	Retained by DCC
Town/Neighbourhood Adopted Plans	Indefinite	Historical purposes
Statutory documents, development plans and consultations	Retain for duration of the document	Management
General correspondence paper or emails	2 years minimum	Management
Local/Historical Information	Indefinite – to be securely kept for benefit of the Parish	Historical purposes
<b>Burial Records</b>		
Register of fees collected. • Register of burials • Register of purchased graves. • Register/plan of grave spaces • Register of memorials • Applications for interment • Applications for right to erect. memorials • Disposal certificates • Copy certificates of grant of exclusive rights of burial	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI 204)

Documentation no longer required will be disposed of ensuring any confidential documents are destroyed by shredding. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR regulations.

- End of Policy -

December 2025