

Document Retention and Disposal Policy

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RIPLEY 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 different 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 space.

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 for how long; 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 Responsibilities 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 Protocol

- 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 to 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?
- 5.2 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 wastepaper 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. List of Documents

7.1 The full list of the Council's documents and the procedures for retention or disposal can be found below.

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 and potential weaknesses.

9. Official documents, forms and publications retention schedule

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Accident / incident reports	20 years	Potential Claims	Office	Confidential waste - A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Agendas	5 years	Management	Office / Computer / Website	Bin
Bank paying – in books / receipts	Last completed audit year	Audit	Office	Confidential waste

Bank statements including deposit / saving accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit	Office	Confidential waste
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Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance Regulations 1998) and Management	Office / computer	Bin
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit	Office	Confidential waste
Contracts of employment	Duration of employment plus 6 years	Legislation	Office	Confidential waste
Correspondence - General	1 year	Management	Office / Computer	Confidential Waste/Bin
Correspondence - Staff	3 years	Management	Office / Computer	Confidential Waste
DALC/SLCC circulars	1 year	Management	Office / Computer	Bin
Deeds, leases, contracts and agreements	Indefinite	Legislation	Office / Computer	n/a
Grant Applications	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Office / Computer	Confidential waste - A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	Office / computer	N/A
Insurance Policies	While valid	Management	Office / computer	Bin
Local Development Plans	If in force	Reference	Office / Computer	Bin
Local Historical information	Indefinite	Benefit of Town	Office / Computer	n/a

Magazines and journals	If relevant	Management	Office	Bin
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Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Location Retained	Disposal Method
Minutes	Indefinite	Legislation	Office / Computer / Website	Original signed copies of council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage at Derbyshire County Council Archives. At regular intervals of not more than 5 years, they can be archived.
Neighbourhood Plans	Indefinite	Reference	Office / Computer	n/a
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Office	Confidential waste
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT	Office	Confidential waste
Payroll	12 years	Superannuation	Office / computer	Confidential waste
Playground equipment inspection reports	Indefinite	Legal	Office / Computer	n/a
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Office	Confidential waste - A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
Receipt and Payment Accounts	Indefinite	Archive	Office	N/A
Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management	Office / Computer / Website	Bin
Staff appraisals	Duration of employment	Management	Office / computer	Confidential Waste