



# Document Management and Archive Policy

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Approved by: Finance and Partnership Committee

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## **1. Introduction**

This policy guides the management and timely disposal of correspondence files and other Town Council documents. This policy also guides members of the public as to what documents are readily available for requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **2. Scope**

The policy applies to all documents produced by the Town Council and all documents received in the Town Council office. Reviewing and disposal of all such documents will take place on an annual basis. Documents produced by and readily available from other sources will be destroyed when they are outdated or superseded.

## **3. Policy**

The following documents will be retained for the periods stated and the reasons given:

<b>Document</b>	<b>Minimum Period of Retention</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Minute Books	Minute Books	Historical
Scale of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Annual Audited Accounts	Indefinite	Historical
Receipt Books	6 years	VAT
Allotment Receipts	6 years	VAT
Bank Statements	6 years	Audit
Cheque Book Stubs	6 years	Audit
Quotations/Tenders	12 years	Statute of Limitations
Paid Invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid Cheques	6 years	Statute of Limitations
Sundry Debtor Invoices	6 years	VAT
Allotment Debtors	6 years	VAT
VAT Records	6 years	VAT
PAYE Records	12 years	Superannuation
Employers Liability Insurance	40 years	Management & Statute of Limitations
Public Liability Insurance	21 years	Management & Statute of Limitations
Health & Safety Records	21 years	Management & Statute of Limitations
Risk Assessments	6 years	Audit
Allotment Agreements	Indefinite	Audit & Management

Title Deeds, Leases, Agreements & Contracts	Indefinite	Audit & Management
Members Allowances Register	6 years	Tax & Statute of Limitations
Hire of Facilities & Lettings	6 years	VAT

At the end of the stated periods, the files will be destroyed.

#### **4. General Documentation**

Other than those documents stated under point 3, general documentation will be destroyed after 5 years. Any documents of a historical nature will be offered to the County Records Office for safe keeping. Any documents relating to Town Council land and property will be retained indefinitely by the Town Council to give a complete overview of refurbishments, disposals or acquisitions. Information relating to Town Council projects will be retained for a period of 12 years.

#### **5. Development Control (Planning)**

Development Control applications supplied by South Gloucestershire Council will be destroyed after 1 year. If a particular planning application forms part of a planning history for a specific site or a Town Council owned property, then the application will be kept indefinitely or until such times as the site is developed.

#### **6. Personnel Documents**

If a member of staff leaves the employment of the Town Council, the individual's personnel file will be destroyed after 1 year. If there is likely to be a claim made against the Town Council under employment or other relevant legislation, the personnel file will be archived until such time as any claim has been dealt with or legal advice states that it may be destroyed. A basic level of information will be permanently retained on all employees. (E.g., length of time employed, courses attended etc) Point 6.6 of the Town Council Safeguarding Policy states: 'Access to the file and records of the alleged abuser (if staff) will be limited to those with specific interest in the issue which will usually be the Staffing and Governance Sub-Committee. Records will be stored securely and destroyed after 10 years, unless there is a good reason for keeping them for a longer time.'

#### **7. Storage of Retained Documents**

Retained documents will be stored on the Town Council's premises and archived to ensure easy retrieval. Items retained for short-term use (less than 5 years) will be

stored on disc/tape format. All other documents will be retained in paper format. A review of the method of storage will be carried out periodically to ensure items continue to be accessible.

## **8. Historical Information**

Documents and files kept for historical reasons will periodically be reviewed and offered to the County Records Office for safekeeping. This is to ensure that very old documents are kept in optimum condition to ensure longevity.

## **9. Destruction of Documents**

All documents earmarked for disposal will be sent for destruction by a recognised contractor specialising in this type of work. All documents will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that anything containing personal information covered by the Data Protection Act is sent for secure destruction by a recognised contractor.