DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Introduction

The guidelines set out in this document supports the Data Protection Policy and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) and other associated legislation.

It is important that the Village Council has in place arrangements for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate management of services in undertaking its responsibilities. This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention of documents and sets out the requirements for the disposal of documents. However, it is important to note that this is a live document and will be updated on a regular basis.

Great Coates Village Council will ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its functions and the provision of services, whilst adhering to any legal or statutory requirements.

Aims and Objectives

It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work that the Council does and the services that we provide to our residents. This document will help us to:

- Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the GDPR.
- Save employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.
- Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

Scope

For the purpose of this policy, 'documents' includes electronic, microfilm, microfiche and paper records.

Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained where possible.

Standards of good practice

The Council will make every effort to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:

- Adhere to requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule at Annex A.

- Personal information will be retained securely and access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel.
- Disclosure information will be securely retained.
- Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required.
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed.
- Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes eg. Equalities data.
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information will be retained and that will be held within a secure storage facility.

Breach of Policy and Standards

Any employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy may, depending on the circumstances of the case, have disciplinary action, which could include dismissal, taken against them.

Where there is a breach of the policy, the Council may need to consider whether there is also a breach of the GDPR.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Village Council Clerk has responsibility for implementation of the policy under delegation of the Village Council.

The Clerk is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.

Retention

Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements, guidance from the National Association of Local Councils and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Professional Development (CIPD).

Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place.

The attached ‘Appendix’ shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by the Village Council for the management of specific documentation types. Officers holding documents should exercise judgement as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of those periods detailed in the attached ‘Appendix’

Disposal

Documents/data no longer required by the Village Council for administrative purposes must be finely shredded/disposed of through specialist waste removal contractors and deleted entirely and securely from the Village Council computer system(s).

APPENDIX A

Document Retention Timescales

Documents listed may not necessarily apply to Great Coates Village Council

Document	Retention Period
Finance	
Financial Published Final Accounts	Indefinitely
Annual Governance and Accountability Return	Indefinitely
Final Account working papers	6 years
Records of all accounting transactions held in the financial management system	At least 6 years
Cash Books (records of monies paid out and received)	12 years
Purchase Orders	6 years
Cheque Payment Listings (Invoices received)	6 years
Payment Vouchers Capital and Revenue (copy invoices)	12 years
Goods received notes, advice notes and delivery notes	3 years
Petty cash vouchers and reimbursement claims	6 years
Debtors and rechargeable works records	6 years
Expenses and travel allowance claims	6 years
Asset Register for statutory accounting purposes	10 years
Adopted annual budget	6 years
Financial Plan	6 years
Budget Estimates – Detailed Working Papers and summaries	3 years
Bank Statements (electronic) and Instructions to banks	6 years
Bank Statements (Hardcopy)	6 years
Prime evidence that money has been banked	6 years
Refer to Drawer (RD) cheques	3 years
Cancelled Expenditure cheques	3 years
Bank Reconciliation	3 years
Cheques presented/drawn on the Council bank accounts	3 years
Grant/Funding Applications & Claims	3 years
Precept Forms	Indefinitely
Internal Audit Plans/Reports	3 years
Fees and Charges Schedules	6 years

Loans and Investment Records; temporary loan receipts	10 years (after redemption of loan)
Current and expired insurance contracts and policies and Insurance records	3 years (or as long as it is possible for a claim to be made)
Claims correspondence	3 years after settlement
Employers Liability Insurance Certificate	40 years
VAT records, input and output	10 years
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand or seal	12 years from completion of contract

Redundancy records	6 years from the date of redundancy
Personnel/employment	
Unsuccessful application forms	6 months to 1 year
Unsuccessful reference requests	1 year
Successful application forms and CVs	For duration of employment + 6 years
References received	For duration of employment + 6 years
Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.	For duration of employment + 6 years
Annual leave records	For duration of employment + 6 years
Unpaid leave/special leave	For duration of employment + 6 years
Annual appraisal/assessment records	Current year and previous 2 years
Time Control Records	2 years
Disclosure and Barring checks	6 months
Employee Personnel files, training records, discipline and grievance records and working time records	6 years after employment ceases
Disciplinary or grievance investigations - unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal
Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc	3 years after the tax year in which the maternity period ended
Time sheets and overtime claims	6 years
Statutory end of year returns to Inland Revenue and Pensions records	Indefinitely
Income Tax and National Insurance Records	Not less than 3 years after the end of the financial year to which they relate
Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc	6 years
Accident books, records and reports	3 years from date of last entry (If a child or young adult is involved, then until the person reaches the age of 21
Redundancy records	6 years from the date of redundancy
Supporting documentation for tax returns	6 years

Corporate	
Councillors Registers of Interests	When councillor is no longer a public office holder
Councillors Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms	When councillor is no longer a public office holder
Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office	When the term of office comes to an end

All *[Town/Parish Council/Meeting]* minutes including minutes of committees, sub-committee meetings and any working group minutes	Permanently (in perpetuity) and archived after two years
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed
Asset management records	Indefinitely
Internal audit fraud investigation	7 years from date of final outcome of investigation
Risk register	Indefinitely
Risk assessments (any)	6 years
Burial records and associated documentation	Indefinitely
Drivers log books and mileage	6 years
Vehicle maintenance and registration records (all necessary certificates, MOT certificates, test records and vehicle registration documents etc)	2 years after vehicle disposed
Allotment application forms	Length of Tenancy + 2 years
Allotment agreements	Length of Tenancy + 6 years
Pre-tender qualification document, summary list of expression of interest received, a summary of any financial or technical evaluation supplied with the expressions of interest Initial application	1 year
Successful tender documentation Life of contract	6 years from date of final payment
Unsuccessful tender documentation	Until final payment of contract let is made
Deeds of land and property	Permanently or until property is disposed of
Land and property rental agreements	6 years after expiry of the agreement
Property evaluation lists	Indefinitely
Lease agreements, variation and valuation queries	15 years after the expiry of the agreement
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years
Booking diaries	3 years
Premises License applications	Indefinitely

Health & Safety	
Health and Safety Accident books and records	3 years after the date of the last entry (unless an accident involving chemicals or asbestos is contained within then 40 years). If the accident concerns a

	child or young adult retain until the person reaches the age of 21.
Medical records containing details of employee exposed to asbestos or as specified by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999	40 years from the date of the last entry
Medical examination certificates	4 years from date of issue
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years
Parks and play area inspection reports	6 years
All inspection certificates	6 years
Repairs job sheets	2 years
Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)	2 years
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of general waste	3 years
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of hazardous waste	10 years
Plant and equipment testing	2 years
Unusual Incident Forms	3 years
Manual Handling Assessment Forms	3 years

Other	
Hard copy routine correspondence	**Suggested:** File management – retain until matter dealt with; maximum period 6 months. Where the *[Town/Parish Council/Meeting]* believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will redact personal data from the correspondence.
Electronic routine correspondence	**Suggested:** File management – retain until matter dealt with; maximum period 6 months. Where the *[Town/Parish Council/Meeting]* believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will redact personal data from the correspondence.
Requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000	**Suggested:** File management – retain until matter dealt with plus 6 months. Where the *[Town/Parish Council/Meeting]* believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will

	redact personal data from the correspondence.
Planning Applications	**Suggested:** Recommendations in connection with relevant planning applications are recorded in the minutes which are retained indefinitely. Correspondence (both hard copy and electronic) received in connection with planning applications will be retained in accordance with the routine documents/correspondence policy noted above. Where an application is refused by the local planning authority, the application will be retained until the period within which an appeal can be made has expired.

Agreements and related correspondence	
Contracts with customers and suppliers Licensing agreements, Rental/Hire Purchase agreements Indemnities and guarantees Other agreements and contracts	Six years after expiry or termination of contract Six years is generally the time limit within which proceedings founded on a contract may be brought If the contract is executed as a deed the limitation period is twelve years Actions for latent damage may be brought up to fifteen years after the damage occurs
Donations and Subscription Records	
Donations granted and related correspondence	Six years
Deed of covenant	Six years after last payment made but up to 12 years if any payments are still outstanding or there is any dispute regarding the Deed
Subscription records	3 years after cessation of membership