

1. Introduction

1.1. The guidelines set out in this document supports Bentham Town Council's Data Protection procedures and arrangements and aligns with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and any associated legislation.

1.2. It is important that the Town Council maintains records for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate and efficient performance of its responsibilities. This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention and disposal of documents and sets out the requirements for the disposal of documents. It is important to note that this is a live document and will be updated as a requirement.



1.3. Bentham Town Council will ensure that the minimum amount of information necessary and will retain the minimum amount of information that is required to carry out its functions and the provision of services, with a view to ensuring that the information is available for reference.

2. Aims and Objectives

Bentham Town Council

2.1. It is recognised that records are a vital part of the work that the Town Council does and the services that we provide to our residents. This document will help us to:

Records Management Policy

- 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

3. Scope

3.1. This policy applies to all records held by the Council, including electronic, microfilm, microfiche and paper records.

Approved and adopted: 1st March 2021

3.2. Original records of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained.

Review Date: May 2022

4. Standards of good practice

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

- Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule at Annex A.
- Personal information will be retained in locked filing cabinets within Bentham Town Hall, access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel
- Disclosure information will be retained in a locked cabinet in Bentham Town Hall.
- Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required.

1 Introduction

1.1. The guidelines set out in this document supports Bentham Town Council's Data Protection procedures and arrangements and assists in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) and other associated legislation.

1.2. It is important that the Town 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.

1.3. Bentham Town 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.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1. It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work that the Town 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.

3. Scope

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

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

4. Standards of good practice

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

- Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule at Annex A.
- Personal information will be retained in locked filing cabinets within Bentham Town Hall, access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel.
- Disclosure information will be retained in a locked cabinet in Bentham Town Hall.
- 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 e.g., Equalities data.
- Wherever possible only one copy of any personal information will be retained and that will be held within the locked filing cabinet within the Town Hall.

5. Breach of Policy and Standards

5.1. 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.

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

6. Roles and Responsibilities

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

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

7. Retention

7.1. 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).

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

7.3. The attached 'Appendix' shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by the Town 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'

8. Disposal

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

8.2 When disposing of records **and equipment**, the Council will ensure that personal data cannot be retrieved from them, by shredding paper documents, and by destroying electronic storage equipment or considering the use of the services of a professional data security firm.

Bank Reconciliation	3 years	RFO
Cheques presented/drawn on the Council bank accounts	3 years	RFO
Grant/Funding Applications & Claims	3 years	RFO

APPENDIX A

Document Retention Timescales

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

Precept Forms	Indefinitely	N/A
Internal Audit Plans/Reports	3 years	RFO
Fees and Charges Schedules	6 years	RFO
Loans and Investment Records; temporary loan receipts	10 years (after redemption of loan)	RFO
Current and expired insurance contracts and policies indefinitely Insurance records and claims	10 years (or as long as it is possible for a claim to be made under then)	RFO
VAT records, input and output	10 years	RFO
Final accounts of contracts executed under hand or seal	12 years from completion of contract	RFO

Document	Retention period	Who may dispose of
Personnel/employment		
Unsuccessful application forms	6 months to 1 year	Clerk
Unsuccessful reference requests	1 year	Clerk
Successful application forms and CVs	For duration of employment + 6 years	Clerk
References received	For duration of employment + 6 years	Clerk
Statutory sick records, pay, calculations, certificates etc.	For duration of employment + 6 years	RFO
Annual leave records	For duration of employment + 6 years	Clerk
Unpaid leave/special leave	For duration of employment + 6 years	Clerk
Annual appraisal/assessment records	Current year and previous 2 years	Clerk
Time Control Records	2 years	Clerk
Disclosure and Barring checks	6 months	Clerk
Employee Personnel files, training records, discipline and grievance records and working time records	6 years after employment ceases	Clerk
Disciplinary or grievance investigations - unproven	Destroy immediately after investigation or appeal	Clerk
Statutory Maternity/Paternity records, calculations, certificates etc	3 years after the tax year in which the maternity period ended	RFO
Time sheets and overtime claims	6 years	Clerk
Statutory end of year returns to Inland Revenue and Pensions records	Indefinitely	N/A
Income Tax and National Insurance Records	Not less than 3 years after the end of the financial year to which they relate	RFO
Wages/salary records, overtime, bonuses, expenses etc	6 years	RFO
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)	Clerk

Redundancy records	6 years from the date of redundancy	RFO
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Document	Retention Period	Who may dispose of
Corporate		
Councillors Registers of Interests	When councillor is no longer a public office holder	Clerk
Councillors Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms	When councillor is no longer a public office holder	Clerk
Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office	When the term of office comes to an end	Clerk
All Bentham Town Council minutes including minutes of committees, sub-committee meetings and any working group minutes	Indefinitely and archived after two years	N/A
Policies and procedures	Until updated or reviewed	Clerk
Asset management records	Indefinitely	N/A
Internal audit fraud investigation	7 years from date of final outcome of investigation	RFO
Risk register	Indefinitely	N/A
Risk assessments (any)	6 years	Clerk
Burial records and associated documentation	Indefinitely	N/A
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	Clerk
Successful tender documentation Life of contract	6 years from date of final payment	Clerk
Unsuccessful tender documentation	Until final payment of contract let is made	Clerk
Deeds of land and property	Indefinitely	N/A
Land and property rental agreements	6 years after expiry of the agreement	Clerk
Property evaluation lists	Indefinitely	N/A
Lease agreements, variation and valuation queries	12 years after the expiry of the agreement	Clerk
Documentation referring to externally funded projects	6 years	RFO
Booking diaries	3 years	Clerk
Premises License applications	Indefinitely	N/A

Where the Town Council believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will record personal data from the correspondence.

Documents	Retention Period	Who may dispose of
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.	Clerk
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	Clerk
Medical examination certificates	4 years from date of issue	Clerk
Asbestos records for premises/property including survey and removal records	40 years	Clerk
Parks and play area inspection reports	6 years	Clerk
All inspection certificates	6 years	Clerk
Repairs job sheets	2 years	Clerk
Periodic machinery inspection tests (PAT, equipment calibration etc)	2 years	Clerk
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of general waste	3 years	Clerk
Documents relating to the process of collecting, transporting and disposal of hazardous waste	10 years	Clerk
Plant and equipment testing	2 years	Clerk
Unusual Incident Forms	3 years	Clerk
Manual Handling Assessment Forms	3 years	Clerk

Documents	Retention Period	Who may dispose of
Other		
Hard copy routine correspondence	File management – retain until matter dealt with; maximum period 6 months. Where the Town Council believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will redact personal data from the correspondence.	Clerk

Electronic routine correspondence	File management – retain until matter dealt with; maximum period 6 months. Where the Town Council believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will redact personal data from the correspondence.	Clerk
Requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000	File management – retain until matter dealt with plus 6 months. Where the Town Council believes that it is necessary to keep correspondence for an increased length of time, it will redact personal data from the correspondence.	Clerk
Planning Applications	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.	Clerk
Recordings of meetings	Until the draft minutes of that meeting have been confirmed.	Clerk
Databases holding personal information.	File management – retain until matter dealt with plus 6 months.	Clerk

Chairman..... 

Date..... 1/3/2021

Clerk..... 

Date..... 01/03/2021