



WESTGATE-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

DATA RETENTION AND RECORD MANAGEMENT POLICY

ADOPTED: March 2021

LAST REVIEW AND ADOPTION: May 2026

NEXT REVIEW: May 2027

Introduction

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council is obliged and recognises the need to maintain and retain documentation for a number of purposes, including audit, staff management, tax liabilities and in the event of legal disputes and proceedings. If after the necessary consideration there are papers and records that are no longer of use or relevance they may be destroyed.

The Town Council's Privacy Policy outlines the type of information that the Town Council may have, why we have it and how it is obtained. The Data Protection Policy covers the duty for the Town Council to comply with General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and ensure that data is held securely. The Request for Information Policy explains the general right of access by the public to information held by public authorities subject to exemptions including the Freedom of Information Act 2000 rights.

Record Management

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council's policy on record management will enable the Council to:

- Comply with the relevant legislation and codes of best practice
- Create authentic, reliable and useable records
- Support the Council's business functions, including asset management
- Document the Council's decisions and activities
- Reduce the potential cost of future storage
- Facilitate progress to a paperless office
- Enable the efficient and accurate retrieval of information
- Dispose correctly of records no longer required

The Town Clerk will be responsible for record management.

Officers' Responsibility

All staff are obliged to:

- Keep accurate records
- Keep records for as long as necessary

- Document actions and decisions in records
- Document reasons for the disposal of records
- Ensure all records created by the Town Council are relevant, complete and accurate, without any unsubstantiated or subjective commentary and protected against unauthorised addition, deletion, alteration and use of concealment.

Periods of Retention

The minimum period for which various types of records must be kept are set out in the Retention Schedule at Annex A. These reflect statutory requirements, codes of best practice and recommendations published by professional and other bodies. In the absence of any guidance, it will be the responsibility of the Town Clerk to determine a suitable retention period.

At the end of the retention period, the record must be assessed to determine whether it should be retained for a further period. This is particularly relevant where the record has been the subject of a request for access to information under the GDPR or the FOIA. This is the case even where access to information has been refused, as the record should be retained until the end of the period in which an appeal can be lodged or the appeals procedure exhausted.

Records Disposal

Records designated for disposal must be securely disposed of to preserve confidentiality. No record is to be disposed of without the approval of the Town Clerk, reasons must be given for disposal, and a note made of which records are destroyed with their date of destruction.

RETENTION SCHEDULE**ANNEX A**

DOCUMENT	MINIMUM RETENTION PERIOD	REASON
Employee information	6 years from term of employment	Taxes Management Act 1970 and Limitations Act 1980
Salary records	12 years	Superannuation
Pension contributions	6 years	Pensions Act 2014
Recruitment documentation including job announcements, person specifications and job description	5 Years	Equal Opportunities Claims
Documents on persons not hired to include application forms, letters, CV's and interview notes	1 year	Equal Opportunities
Income Tax	6 years from term of employment	The Income Tax (Employments) Regulations 1993
Correspondence and emails	1 year	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Minute Books	Indefinite	Archive
Timesheets/overtime	Last completed audit year	Audit
Accident Book	3 years	Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Act 2013
Scales of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Annual accounts and asset registers	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Bank statements for all accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying in books and receipts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
VAT records	6 years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT
Petty Cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax PAYE, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Members Allowances and Gifts & Hospitality Register	6 years	Tax and Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)

Previous versions of policies, Standing Orders, Schemes of Delegation, Terms of Reference & Financial Regulations	3 years	Data Protection Act 2018
Quotations and Tenders	6 years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)
Insurance policies	As long as a claim can be made under it	Management and legal proceedings
Certificates for insurance against liabilities for employees	Indefinitely	Future claims
Title deeds, leases, agreements & contracts	Indefinite	Audit and Management
Application to hire football pitches, pavilion. Copies of invoices to hire. Record of agreements.	6 years	Management and potential VAT
Allotments renewals for tenancy agreement, invoices, receipts, notice of termination and key deposit slips.	6 years	Management and Audit

NB The UK Limitation Act 1980 contains a 6-year limit for starting many legal proceedings. So, where documents may be relevant to a contractual claim, it is recommended that these are kept for at least a corresponding 6-year period.