



STOTFOLD TOWN COUNCIL

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION POLICY

1. Purpose

Stotfold Town Council retains essential documents in appropriate formats and for durations that ensure legal compliance. Document storage should ensure security, protect privacy, enable access, optimise space, be cost-effective, and support timely disposal of redundant records.

- 1.2 The Town Council recognises its records as vital public assets essential for accountability and effective operations.
- 1.3 These records require careful management. This policy sets out the Council's responsibilities and activities in regard to the management and retention of its records.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Policy applies to users of Stotfold Town Council information records, both paper and electronic and includes Councillors, residents and employees.
- 2.2 Effective records management relies equally on timely disposal and long-term preservation.

3. Statutory requirements

3.1 Stotfold Town Council will comply with all legal requirements governing the retention and disposal of records. This is including, but not limited to the:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Public Records Act 1958
- VAT Act 1994
- Audit Commission Act 1998
- Local Government Act 1972, S225

3.2 Documents subject to a statutory period of retention are identified by their associated legislation in Annex A.

3. Personal Data

- 3.1 Personal data will only be retained as long as necessary to fulfil its intended purpose, in line with data protection laws.
- 3.2 Details related to the lawfulness of holding data for this Town Council can be found in the Information and Data Protection Policy published on the website.

4. Employee's privacy

The privacy of personnel records will be appropriately assured.

5. Availability and access



All records necessary to Stotfold Town Council's business will be retained for a period of time that assures the availability of records needed.

The Town Council abides by the Limitations Act 1980's 6-year Statute of Limitations for holding certain documents in the event of litigious action, either by the Town Council or a third party.

6. Security of documents

- 6.1 The Council maintains data security through internal policies, access controls, cloud based storage and encryption.
- 6.2 The Town Council records are held in paper and/or electronic format. To minimise the risk of accidental loss of valuable records, masters, or copies (as deemed appropriate) will be stored off site.

7. Storage space and cost

Redundant records may be destroyed in order to reduce the cost of storage, indexing and handling the vast quantity of documents that would otherwise accumulate. Destruction of documents will be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of this Policy to avoid any inference that a document was destroyed in anticipation of a problem.

8. Electronic data storage

- 8.1 The Town Council's online data records are stored in various electronic forms (e.g. .pdf, .jpg, .docx) on Microsoft SharePoint.
- 8.2 All electronic data records, including emails are be subject to the same rules of retention and security as paper records. Access is role-based and encryption and cloud based storage is in place.

9. Disposal of records

- 10.1 All records containing personal information, such as personal names and addresses, will be disposed of through shredding as confidential waste. Where the volume of documents is too large for Town Council facilities, other means of record destruction will be used, such as commercial data shredding services. Non-confidential records, such as correspondence from other government bodies, trade publications, etc will be recycled as paper recycling.
- 10.2 Computer hardware will be professionally cleaned of data prior to disposal or the destruction of the hardware. The Town Council will implement electronic data disposal in accordance with cybersecurity measures.

10. Implementation of the Policy

The Town Clerk will be responsible for the implementation of the Policy.

11. Monitoring and review

The Policy will be reviewed every two years in order to monitor its effectiveness and in order to align with UK Data Protection legislative changes.



This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Stotfold Town Council policies and documents:

- Information and Data Protection Policy
- CCTV Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Information Security Asset Inventory
- Stotfold Town Council Privacy Notice

12. Equality Considerations

- This Policy will ensure equal treatment for all protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 and does not disproportionately impact any group.

Document History

Date Adopted	May 2018	
Date Reviewed	May 2025	Reviewed in line with current legislation
Next Review Date	May 2027	



Document	Minimum retention period	Reason
Signed minutes of Council meetings (hard copies)	Indefinite	Archive
Scale of fees and charges	6 years	Management
Receipt and payment accounts (hard copy)	Indefinite	Archive
Receipt books of all kinds	6 years	VAT
Bank statements including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit
Quotations and tenders	6 years	Statute of Limitations
Paid invoices	6 years	VAT
Paid cheques	6 years	Statute of Limitations
VAT records	6 years	VAT
Petty cash, postage and telephone books	6 years	Tax, VAT, Statute of Limitations
Timesheets	Last completed audit year 3 years	Audit (requirement) and personal injury (best practice)
Wages books/payroll records	12 years	Superannuation
Pension records	6 years (except record of opt-outs – 4 years)	Superannuation
Insurance policies	While valid	Management
Certificates for insurance against liability for employees	Indefinitely	The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI. 2753), Management
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Title deeds, leases	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Members allowances	6 years	Tax, Statute of Limitations
Accident books	25 years from closure	Management



Equipment inspection records	25 years	Management
Premises inspection records	25 years	Management
Risk assessment	3 years from last assessment	Management
Register of Members' interests	18 months after individual ceases to be a Member	Management
Complaints	5 years after closure of case	Management
Press releases	1 year	Management
Public consultation – survey and returns	3 years	Management
Reports, newsletters, etc	Retain as long as useful	Management
Correspondence	6 months	Management
Planning applications where granted, plans and decision letters	Held on CBC planning portal	Planning and enforcement
Appeal decision notices	Held on CBC planning portal	Planning and enforcement
Planning applications where refused, plans and decision letters	Held on CBC planning portal	Planning and enforcement
Structure plans, Local Plans and similar	Indefinite	Audit and Management
For halls, recreation grounds: Application to hire halls, recreation grounds, etc Copies of bills to hirers Lettings diaries	6 years	VAT
Allotments register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, Management
Allotments waiting list	As long as in force and updated	Management
Burial ground: Applications for interment Applications for right to erect memorials Copy certificates of grant of exclusive right of burial	Indefinite	Archives, Cemeteries Orders, Cremations Regulations



Disposal certificates Register of fees collected Register of burials Register of purchased graves Register of memorials Register/plan of grace spaces		
Documentation for legal purposes (unless extended)		
Negligence	6 years	Statute of Limitations
Defamation	1 year	Statute of Limitations
Contract	6 years	Statute of Limitations
Sums recoverable	6 years	Statute of Limitations
Leases	12 years	Statute of Limitations
Personal Injury	3 years	Statute of Limitations
To recover land	12 years	Statute of Limitations
Rent	6 years	Statute of Limitations
Breach of trust	None	Statute of Limitations