

Document Strategy

This is the strategy of the Council for handling documents, both physical and electronic.

Paper Documents

As Council does not have a dedicated office it is unreasonable to expect the Clerk to store large volumes of paper in their home. Paper documents are therefore retained and stored as follows ...

Legal Documents

Minutes

- Original signed Minutes are kept **forever** and are passed to the County Archive after the end of the financial year.
- Current original signed Minutes are retained by the Clerk.

Deeds, Leases etc

- Deeds and Leases are kept **forever**.

Finances

- Annual Returns are kept **forever**. The most recent retained by the Clerk with others passed to the County Archive.
- Annual Accounts are kept **forever**. The most recent retained by the Clerk with others passed to the County Archive.
- Assets Register is kept **forever**.
- Receipts, invoices, VAT records are kept for **7 years**.
- Bank Statements are kept for **7 years**.
- Cheque book stubs and Paying-in books are kept **from the last completed external audit**.
- Internal & External Audit papers are kept for **5 years**.
- Insurance Policies are kept **whilst they are still valid**.
- Employer's Liability Insurance Certificates are kept for **21 years**. They can be scanned and then originals destroyed.
- Public Liability Insurance Certificates, policies and receipts are kept for **21 years**. They can be scanned and then originals destroyed.

Planning Applications

- Those for Council property are kept **forever**.
- Others are destroyed after review at Council.

Contracts

- Quotations are kept for **7 years**.
- Kept for **6 years** after the end of the contract.

Handwritten Notes

- Destroyed **immediately** after they have served their purpose.

Other Material

- Salary, Tax and NI records are kept for **7 years**.
- Declarations of Acceptance of Office are kept for **Term of Office plus 1 year**.
- Members' Register of Interests are kept for **Term of Office plus 1 year**.
- Complaints are kept for **1 year**.
- General information, correspondence and e-mails without Statutory Obligations are kept for **6 months**.
- General information, correspondence and e-mails **with** Statutory Obligations are kept for **3 years**.
- Material that may be of a future historical value will be brought before Council for a retention decision and could be offered to a local library or the County Archive.

Material passing to County Archive.

- ❖ Should be filed in the same pattern as that in current use to aid any future consultation
- ❖ Deposits should be made regularly to avoid storing records in unsafe locations
- ❖ Delivery or collection can be arranged with the County Archive on 01824 708250

Electronic Documents

Electronic documents are stored in three separate locations. Dropbox Inc. is a free file hosting service operated by a US company based in San Francisco, California. It offers up to 2Gb of storage for free. Beyond that point a monthly fee is payable.

- Dropbox is installed on the Clerk's personal home computer on the desktop.
- This Dropbox folder on the Clerk's desktop is located on a standalone hard drive sync'd to their file hosting cloud storage.
- The access details for the Dropbox account are in the Website & Access Information Document which is in a sealed envelope held by the Chairman and Vice-chairman.

Reasoning

A copy of all electronic documents is always available on the Clerk's standalone hard drive or in the cloud storage.

In an emergency access can be gained by the Chairman or Vice-chairman.

Process

1. The Clerk works on existing documents and creates new documents via the desktop Dropbox folder.
 - a. This folder is automatically sync'd to the Dropbox cloud storage.
2. The Clerk can work on existing documents and creates new documents in the Dropbox cloud storage folder, when for example they are away from the home location.
 - a. Any work is automatically sync'd back with the Dropbox desktop folder when the home computer is next accessed.

This strategy has been compiled with advice from the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Advice Note dated 6th December 2012, the SLCC Clerk's Manual section 8 dated 2007 and Local Government Act 1972 sections 225-229 & 234

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