

Lockton Parish Council

Retention of Documents Policy

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the framework for the management, retention, and disposal of all Council records, in accordance with legal, audit, and governance requirements. It applies to all records regardless of format (paper or electronic).

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by relevant legislation including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Data Protection legislation, and the Limitation Act 1980. Retention periods reflect statutory limitation periods, audit requirements, and operational needs. Where multiple retention periods apply, the longest period shall be used.

3. Responsibilities

The Clerk is responsible for implementation and compliance. Councillors must ensure that any Council-related records they hold are passed to the Clerk. All records must be accurate, secure, and accessible.

4. Retention Principles

Records will be retained only as long as necessary but long enough to meet legal, financial, and operational obligations. High-risk documents (contracts, legal, land, insurance) will be retained longer or permanently.

5. Retention Schedule

MINIMUM RETENTION PERIODS:

- Minutes, Annual Accounts, Annual Returns – Indefinite (Archive)
- Financial records, VAT, invoices – 6 years
- Bank statements – Last completed audit year
- Contracts, agreements, leases, title deeds – Indefinite
- Insurance policies – As long as claims may arise
- Employers liability certificates – Indefinite
- Staff records – Up to 6 years after employment (or longer if required)
- Recruitment records (unsuccessful candidates) – 6 months
- Complaints – 2 years
- Routine correspondence – 6 months unless required longer

6. Planning Records

The Council will not duplicate records held by the North York Moors National Park but will retain sufficient information to evidence its role as a statutory consultee. Records retained will normally include the Council's consultation responses, relevant correspondence, and a reference to the planning application.

Approved applications will be retained until development is completed. Refused applications will be retained until the appeal period has expired. Appeal decisions and records relating to significant or contentious applications may be retained for longer periods where they provide useful precedent or context for future decision-making.

7. Electronic Records Management

Electronic records will be managed to the same standards as paper records. This includes secure storage, regular backups, controlled access, and compliance with data protection requirements.

8. Storage and Security

Records will be stored securely to prevent unauthorised access, loss, or damage. Sensitive and personal data will be protected in accordance with data protection legislation.

9. Destruction of Records

Records that have reached the end of their retention period will be securely destroyed. Paper records will be cross-shredded or destroyed by an approved contractor. Electronic records will be permanently deleted.

10. Destruction Log

A record of all destroyed documents will be maintained, including document type, destruction date, method, and authorisation.

11. Review

This policy and the Council's records management practices will be reviewed annually to ensure compliance and effectiveness.

Adoption

Lockton Parish Council adopted this Retention Policy at its meeting held on ____6/7/26____.

Minute Reference: ____11.1____