

Witham Town Council: Data & Document Retention Policy

This policy sets out the governance arrangements for the retention of all electronic and paper based data and the management of Town Council public records, archives and files.

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that necessary records and documents are adequately protected and maintained and to ensure that records that are no longer needed by Witham Town Council or are of no value are destroyed at the proper time. This Policy is also for the purpose of aiding employees of the Council in understanding their obligations in retaining electronic documents - including e-mail, Web files, text files, sound and movie files, PDF documents, and all Microsoft Office or other formatted files.

This Policy is underpinned by the data protection principle of storage limitation, which requires that personal data is kept in a form which permits identification of individuals for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which it is processed, subject to certain statutory and archiving exceptions.

The Council will ensure that retention periods are justified by legal, regulatory, operational or historical needs, documented in a retention schedule, and that records are securely destroyed or archived when they are no longer required.

Attached as Appendix A is a Record Retention Schedule that is approved as the initial maintenance, retention and disposal schedule for physical records of Witham Town Council and the retention and disposal of electronic documents. The Town Clerk is the officer in charge of the administration of this policy and the implementation of processes and procedures to ensure that the Record Retention Schedule is followed. The Town Clerk is also authorised to: make modifications to the Record Retention Schedule from time to time to ensure that it is in compliance with new Acts of Parliament and department regulations.

When making changes to the Record Retention Schedule, the Town Clerk will have regard to current ICO guidance, NALC/local council retention advice and any relevant sector-specific requirements.

This policy is overseen by the Policy & Resources Committee and should be periodically reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose and adhered to.

The Council will undertake routine (at least annual) reviews of records held to identify material that has reached the end of its retention period and to confirm appropriate disposal or archiving.

Files managed as part of this system are codified and managed by the Town Clerk and supporting staff. Resolution files and other such public records are open to public inspection during reasonable office hours at no charge to the public.

All destruction of records will be carried out securely on site and, where appropriate, documented in a destruction log noting record type, date and method of destruction and authorising officer.

Agreed at Minute 58(b) of Policy & Resources Committee held 29.3.2022

Reviewed: Policy & Resources Committee held 23rd March 2026

Review date: March 2028

POLICY NO: WTC/032 - POLICY & RESOURCES

APPENDIX A - RECORD RETENTION SCHEDULE

Retention periods shown are normally minimum periods; some records may need to be kept longer where required by law, ongoing business need or in connection with investigations, complaints, claims or audits.

- Personal data retained for longer periods for archiving, research or statistical purposes will be processed in accordance with safeguards required by data protection legislation.

- Where a legal “hold” applies (for example, because of a complaint, Ombudsman investigation, audit, insurance claim or legal proceedings), destruction of relevant records will be suspended until the “hold” is lifted.

There follows a grid showing retention periods with the only amendment being for CCTV footage where high-risk incidents or where footage is required for investigation, insurance or legal purposes, relevant clips may be retained for longer until the matter is concluded in line with ICO CCTV guidance.

RECORD TYPE	PUBLIC ARCHIVE	RETENTION PERIOD
ACCIDENT REPORTS	NO	15 YEARS FROM FILED DATE
ACCOUNTING LEDGERS	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
ANNUAL BUDGETS	YES	INDEFINITE
BANK STATEMENTS	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
BOOKING & HIRE FORMS	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
BYELAWS	YES	INDEFINITE
CCTV FOOTAGE	NO	30 DAYS For high-risk incidents or where footage is required for investigation, insurance or legal purposes, relevant clips may be retained for longer until the matter is concluded in line with ICO CCTV guidance.
COMMUNITY GROUP NEWSLETTERS	YES	INDEFINITE
CONSULTANT REPORTS	NO	5 YEARS
CONTRACTS AND RELATED CORRESPONDENCE	NO	7 YEARS FROM TERMINATION OF CONTRACT
CORRESPONDENCE NOT OTHERWISE FILED WITH A RESOLUTION	NO	5 YEARS
CREDIT CARD RECORDS	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END

RECORD TYPE	PUBLIC ARCHIVE	RETENTION PERIOD
DBS DISCLOSURES	NO	1 WEEK AFTER RECEIPT
EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS	NO	5 YEARS FROM END OF EMPLOYMENT
EMPLOYEE EXPENSES	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
EMPLOYEE PAYROLL	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
EMPLOYEE PENSIONS	NO	INDEFINITE
EMPLOYEE RECORDS	NO	5 YEARS FROM END OF EMPLOYMENT
EMPLOYEE TIMESHEETS	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
FULL COUNCIL & COMMITTEE AGENDAS	YES	INDEFINITE
GRANT APPLICATIONS MADE	YES	INDEFINITE
GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
HEALTH & SAFETY RECORDS	NO	INDEFINITE
INSURANCE CERTIFICATES	YES	INDEFINITE
INSURANCE CLAIMS	YES	INDEFINITE
INSURANCE SCHEDULES	YES	INDEFINITE
INT/EXT AUDIT REPORT	YES	INDEFINITE
INVESTMENT RECORDS	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
LEGAL ADVICE RECEIVED	YES	INDEFINITE
LICENCES AND PERMITS	YES	INDEFINITE
MATERIAL OF HISTORICAL VALUE (SEE NOTES)	YES	INDEFINITE
MAYORAL CIVIC EVENTS	YES	INDEFINITE
MEMBERS REGISTER OF INTERESTS	YES	INDEFINITE
MINUTE BOOKS	YES	INDEFINITE

RECORD TYPE	PUBLIC ARCHIVE	RETENTION PERIOD
PROPERTY LEASES	YES	INDEFINITE
PROPERTY RECORDS & VALUATIONS	YES	INDEFINITE
PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS	YES	INDEFINITE
RESOLUTION FILES	YES	INDEFINITE
RISK ASSESSMENTS	NO	INDEFINITE
STOPPED CHEQUES	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
SURVEYS AND REFERENDA	YES	INDEFINITE
TENDERS	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
TERMS OF REFERENCE	YES	INDEFINITE
TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTERS	YES	INDEFINITE
TOWN COUNCIL POLICY	YES	ONE COPY FOR INDEFINITE ARCHIVE, DISPOSAL AFTER END OF ADMIN USE OR SUPERSEDED
TRAFFIC REGULATION NOTICES	YES	INDEFINITE
TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS	YES	INDEFINITE
UNSUCCESSFUL JOB APPLICATIONS	NO	SIX MONTHS AFTER INTERVIEWS
VAT RECORDS	NO	7 YEARS FROM FINANCE YEAR END
VEHICLES	NO	UNTIL DISPOSAL OF VEHICLE
WTC PUBLISHED REPORTS	YES	ONE COPY FOR INDEFINITE ARCHIVE, DISPOSAL AFTER END OF ADMIN USE.