

Records Retention Schedule

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Contents

Introduction	1
Limitation of Scope	1
Objectives of the Retention Guidelines	1
Destruction of Records	1
Contact	1
Retention Schedule Headings - Guidance	2
Retention by service area	3

Index of services

Benefits	3
Bereavement Services	3
Building Control	4
Business Engagement and Regeneration	4
Business Engagement and Regeneration	5
Business Rates	5
CCTV	6
Chief Executive's Office	6
Communications	6
Contact Centre	7
Council Tax	7
Democratic Services	8
Elections and Electoral Registration	9
Environmental Crime	10
Food and Safety	11
Housing Advice and Homelessness	12
Human Resources	13
Information Governance	13
Insurance / Claims	14
Licensing	14
Legal Services	15
Markets	16
Operational Services	16
Parking	17
Partnerships and Community Safety	17
Planning - Development	18
Planning - Strategic	19

Introduction

These guidelines have been developed to provide guidance for the retention periods of information, (or 'records') containing personal data held by the Council.

Guidelines quoted are apply to any particular format of record, whether electronic or manual.

Records that have reached their recommended retention period under these Guidelines are destroyed to ensure compliance with the requirements of current data protection legislation.

Limitation of Scope

These Guidelines should only be used in relation to records owned by Stafford Borough Council and not records owned by other organisations which may be held on our premises.

Legislation relating to service areas should always be considered where applicable before destruction takes place.

Objectives of the Retention Guidelines

The aims of the Guidelines are to:

- Prevent the retention of records past their retention period.
- Prevent the premature destruction of records that need to be retained for a specified period to satisfy legal, financial and other requirements of public administration.
- Provide consistency for the destruction of those records not required permanently after specified periods.

Destruction of Records

Whenever there is the possibility of litigation, the records and information that are likely to be affected would not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has been removed.

Contact

Queries or requests for clarification may be addressed to dpo@staffordbc.gov.uk

Retention Schedule Headings - Guidance

These Retention Guidelines that follow are divided into sections of commonly undertaken administrative functions.

Function by business area

The name of each function / department is specified at the top of each section. This defines the function relating to the group of listed records.

Scope

Defines the business function category within each business area.

Description

A description of the record category.

Examples

The type of records included within each category

Retention

A recommended retention period specifying for how long the records should be kept prior to destruction.

Retention by service area

Benefits

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Revenues and Benefits	Applying for, claiming or accessing a claim for benefit payment	Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support materials including ID (possibly includes passports / birth certificate), rent agreement, NI Number, evidence of earnings, Benefit Overpayment referrals, Case Files, Investigations etc.	End of Benefits payments +6 years
Revenues and Benefits	Notification to claimant of benefit entitlement.	Name, Address, NI Number and benefit calculation and award etc	End of Benefits payments +6 years

Bereavement Services

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Cremation / burial	Certification / booking in of funeral / cremation.	Order for Cremation, forms, payment details, disposal confirmation, Cause of death certificate etc	In Perpetuity
Notice of Interment	Notice of Interment	Details of deceased, Applicant, Payment and grave	Current Financial Year + 5 years
Register of death	Register of death	DoB, DoD, age, employment, married	Current Financial Year + 5 years
Remains	Remains Form	Applicant and Deceased information, disposal location and Finance details	Current Financial Year + 5 years
Purchase of plot	Purchase of plot / Exclusive rights of burial	Name of Deceased, Applicant contact details, inscription and Payment	Application +75 Years
Memorials	Memorial requests, renewals, records, ending of memorial etc	Name of Deceased, Applicant contact details, inscription and Payment	Close of record + 5 years
Correspondence	General Correspondence	General Enquiries	Current Financial Year + 5 years
Assessing the service	Feedback to service	Applicant contact details	Current Financial Year + 5 years
Funeral fees	Request, order, invoice etc	DoD, account details, fees	Current Financial Year + 5 years
Friends of the Cemeteries Membership Forms	Contact details	Name, Contact details.	Current Financial Year + 5 years

Building Control

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Building Control	Building Control Applications including Cheques	Building Control Applications; Name, Address, Contact details, cheques.	Retain permanently
Building Control	Reports of dangerous structures	Dangerous structures correspondence and online forms. Name, address, contact details	Retain permanently
Building Control	Reports of unauthorised work, Daily inspection logs, Solicitor enquiries, Fee quotes	Address, report of unauthorised work.	Closure of case +6 Years
Building Control	Pre-Application advice	Name, address, contact details, pre-application etc	Closure of case +6 Years

Business Engagement and Regeneration

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Regeneration	Stafford Town Centre Business Rate Relief Scheme	Enquiries from members of the public wishing to set up in business. Existing businesses requiring information and/or to apply for the scheme.	Current financial year + 6 years
Regeneration	Rural Enterprise Program and Leader (both SCC funding)	Rural Enterprise Program and Leader applications	Current financial year + 6 years
Regeneration	Enjoy Card applications	Distribution of 'enjoy' cards to members of the public for the Stafford Town Centre Partnership by request.	Closure of request +1 Year
Business Engagement	General Business Enquiries	Enquiries from members of the public wishing to set up in business including existing businesses.	Closure of request +1 Year
Business Engagement	Our Beautiful Borough Programme	Borough retail tourism and leisure providers.	For 1 year or sooner if business closes
Let's Grow Grant	Let's Grow Grant Funds claims	Enquiry form / application form / supporting evidence / claim info / monitoring	6 Years from project end date

Business Engagement and Regeneration

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Business Databases	Process for managing business data for those who want to be kept up to date with latest information to support businesses	Excel spreadsheet containing business information and contact details / outlook distribution lists for e-bulletins / approved email addresses.	No fixed date as businesses provide consent by not 'unsubscribing'
Government COVID related Grants	Process for business applying for and claiming Government COVID related grants	Application form / supporting evidence / claim info	6 Years from project end date
Let's Grow Grant	Process for businesses applying for and claiming Let's Grow Grant Fund	Enquiry form / application form / supporting evidence / claim info / monitoring	6 Years from project end date
Town Centre / Growth and Inward Investment Business Rate Relief Programmes	Application forms - process for applying to receive a reduction in their business rates	Application form and supporting evidence / monitoring	6 years from discount start date
Levelling up projects	Affected landowners, business occupiers	names, addresses of any affected landowners, business occupiers	12 Years from end of project

Business Rates

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Business Rates	Administration of Business Rates	Case files including liability discount and exemptions, enforcement agents notifications and general correspondence	Closure of account + 6 Years
Business Rates	Recovery of Business Rates (for non payment)	Case files including liability discount and exemptions, enforcement agents notifications, general correspondence, Liability Order lists etc	Settlement of Case + 6 Years
Business Rates	Claims for Business Rate Relief	Form / supporting information containing name, address plus any other relevant information for relief	Held permanently

CCTV

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Security	CCTV Recordings	Footage	If not required for evidential purposes, kept for 31 days
Security	CCTV Evidential DVDs	CCTV Evidential DVDs	Settlement of Case or Issue + 3 years
Security	CCTV Footage requests	Names, request details etc	Closure Date + 6 years

Chief Executive's Office

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Chief Executive, Civic, Leader and Members	Corporate Response	Processing corporate enquiries	Closure Date + 2 Years
Chief Executive, Civic, Leader and Members	Customer Complaints	Customer complaints and comments recording and processing	Closure of case +6 Years
Chief Executive and Leader	MP Enquiries and Complaints	Customer complaints and comments via MP - recording and processing	Closure of case +6 Years

Communications

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Social Media	Social media	Account Contact details, e.g. residents via twitter submitting an address for bin collection	Delete after use
Media contacts	Media contact details	Names, contact details etc.	Until contact expires
Press releases	Recording communications outputs	Press releases	Removed from website after 3 months.
Website	Customer Website Feedback (Rate this Page)	Email address (optional)	Email address removed after 1 Month
Website	Web Page Subscription	Email address	Removed when customer unsubscribes from page

Contact Centre

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Contact Centre	Fly Tipping - Reported	Can include name, contact details, details of tipping incident.	Close of case +6 years
Contact Centre	Contact Centre Voice recorder	Voice recording system retains all in hours (and out of hours) call interactions for the Contact Centre	Close of call +1 year
Contact Centre	Query via contact centre / request for service	Can include name, contact details, email address, request details etc	Closure of call +6 Years

Council Tax

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Council Tax	Administration of Council Tax including recovery of non-payment of Council Tax	Case files including liability discount and exemptions, enforcement agents notifications and general correspondence	Settlement of Case + 6 Years
Council Tax	Reports of current debts or exemptions to the payment of Council Tax	Name, Address, amount of liability, details of other residents	Closure Date + 6 Years
Council Tax	List of deaths registered at the Registry Office	Names and contact details of next of kin	Retain Until Conclusion of Administrative Use
Property Valuation	Domestic Property Valuation for the purpose of the making of the rate	Name, address, contact details	Length of residency or until superseded.

Democratic Services

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Councillor records	Councillors' contact details	Details of name, address, contact details etc	1 year from last period as Cllr
Councillor records	Councillors' Register of Interests	Self completed form detailing interests in land and property and memberships and affiliations	1 year from last period as Cllr
Petitions	Petitions and E-Petitions	names, addresses, contact details of petitioners and names of signatories	1 year from petition date
Assets of community value	Assets of community value	names, addresses, contact details of nominators and asset owners	1 year from end of listing of ACV
Decision Making	Council and Committee Meetings	Applies to open and restricted meetings. Includes minutes, agenda and associated material	Permanently
Member Support	Gifts and Hospitality	Register of gifts and hospitality	18 months after member leaves office
Member Support	Register of Interest	Records relating to a members disclosure of any involvement in organisations and income received from other bodies, which may affect their actions as council members	18 months after member leaves office

Elections and Electoral Registration

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Electoral Services	Electoral Registration	Process of Collecting data to maintain the currency and accuracy of the electoral register	15 years (for checking Overseas electors). Indefinitely in archives. (The British Library holds both paper and data copies indefinitely)
Electoral Services	Elections	Ballot Papers - All types of elections, consolidated returns of votes received	Closure Date + 1 Year
Electoral Services	Election candidates details - including statement of persons nominated	Contains name, address, contact details	15 years (for checking Overseas electors). Indefinitely in archives. (The British Library holds both paper and data copies indefinitely)
Electoral Services	Election Candidates	Nomination of candidates / creation of election	1 year

Environmental Crime

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Environmental Crime	Abandoned Vehicles/Nuisance Vehicles/Fly posting/Dog fouling	Electronic request made to DVLA	3 years from date of Enquiry
Environmental Crime	Found , tipped information	Personal Information found in waste that has been fly tipped	If prosecuted data to be destroyed once the case has been heard, if not prosecuted data to be destroyed following investigation (permanent file passed to legal dept.)
Environmental Crime	Fixed Penalty Notices given for dog fouling, littering, abandoned vehicles, fly posting etc	Personal Information given when requested by an authorised officer by the alleged offender	If prosecuted data to be destroyed once the case has been heard, if not prosecuted data to be destroyed following investigation (permanent file passed to legal dept.)

Food and Safety

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Investigation, Inspections and Monitoring	Inspecting food hygiene standards of establishments	Food hygiene inspection forms, business operator name, address, contact, email.	Business closure + 6 years
Investigation, Inspections and Monitoring	Notification and investigation of accidents	Accident Notification via national database, Name, accident details.	Closure date + 6 years
Investigation, Inspections and Monitoring	Licensing of Animals	Licence application form. Name Address, Contact	Closure Date + 6 years
Investigation, Inspections and Monitoring	Infectious diseases and food poisoning	Reports of diseases or food poisoning.	Closure Date + 6 years
Investigation, Inspections and Monitoring	Environmental Inspections	Reports on Pollution, food safety, general nuisance, health and wellbeing of animals, infectious diseases.	Closure date + 3 years
Investigation, Inspections and Monitoring	Monitoring to ensure that permitted industrial processes are safe. - pollution of air, water or land.	Inspection details, Owner's name, address, contact. + Correspondence. Complaints	Life of site

Housing Advice and Homelessness

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Housing advice and homelessness	Homeless application	Investigation of reasons for homelessness to assess whether the Council owes a statutory duty to accommodation and whether any discretionary tenancy-related support is provided.	Closure of case +6 Years
Homelessness Prevention	The prevention of a client becoming homeless	information in order to prevent a clients homelessness or planned move to alternative accommodation	Closure of case +6 Years
Private sector access Scheme	The guarantee of a deposit with a private sector landlord	Enables access to the private rented sector	Closure of case +6 Years
Nominations	Nominating clients to Housing Associations for available properties	Processing and collection of client information in order to nominate the client to the Housing Association to consider for accommodation	Closure of case +6 Years
Referrals inwards	Referrals of clients from voluntary/statutory agencies	Referrals of clients from voluntary/statutory agencies	Closure of case +6 Years
Housing repair	Housing Repair assistance loans	Financial loan applications to improve housing conditions to mitigate / remove category 1 Hazards	Closure of case +10 years
Evictions	Suspected Illegal eviction investigations	Criminal investigations and collation of information on tenant and landlord behaviour	Closure of case +10 years
Energy and Efficiency	Energy efficiency measures	Support actions to offer better value energy usage and energy efficiency	Closure of case +6 Years
Empty homes	Returning empty homes to residential use	Empty homes investigations / owners / occupiers	Current financial year and whilst property empty
Grants	Disabled facilities Grants	Collation of personal financial and medical information	Closure of case +10 years

Human Resources

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Recruitment	Records forming part of the selection process for unsuccessful applicants. Including any other documentation forming part of the selection process	Application Forms, Assessment forms, CVs, Interview notes	12 months from date of application
Recruitment	Work Experience student placements	Requests for work experience, contact details, next of kin, aspirations, record of attendance etc	Termination of employment + 6 Years
Employee administration	Personnel File	Employment records	Termination of employment + 6 Years
Occupational Health	The process of checking and ensuring the health of the staff	Pre-employment Health Questionnaires, medical clearance reports, medical referrals, Health assessments/questionnaires	Date of Birth + 75 Years

Information Governance

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Freedom of Information	Freedom of information requests and responses	Requests and Responses including name, contact and request details	Closure date +6 years
Data Protection	Subject access requests	Requests and Responses including name, contact and the information requested	Closure date +6 years
Breach Investigations	All documentation relating to breach investigation	Documentation relating to breach investigation including name, contact details and breach, or alleged breach details.	Closure date + 6years

Insurance / Claims

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Insurance	Claiming for damage/injury / Insurance claims	Public Liability Claim Form Claim files	Closure of case +6 Years unless a minor and then held for 22 years from date of birth
Insurance	Incident involving a Council vehicle	Motor Accident Report Form, bump card, Name, contact details etc.	Closure of case +6 unless a minor and then held for 22 years from date of birth
Insurance	Cover document issued to Lease flats	Lease Flats Fact Sheet - includes name address and level of cover	Indefinitely

Licensing

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Licensing	Register of premises licences for the sale or consumption of alcohol	Name, address, contact details etc	Closure Date + 6 years
Licensing	Application for registration of business premises	Application, registration, certification and licences in relation to local authorities registration requirements	Date registration lapses + 2 Years
Licensing	Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver	Application forms, contact details and associated information.	Date registration lapses + 2 Years
Licensing	The administration of application, registration, certification and licences in relation to local authorities registration requirements	Dangerous and wild animals licences, Animal Boarding licences, Animal breeding, pet shop clubs, sex establishments, street collections, regulated entertainment, Alcohol licence.	Date registration lapses + 2 Years
Licensing	Scrap Metal Dealer Licences	Scrap Metal Dealer Application Forms including name, contact details and Site licence.	Date registration lapses + 2 Years

Legal Services

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Civil	Process of managing, undertaking or defending for or against civil litigation on behalf of the authority	Civil Litigation file, Officer reports	Statutory Settlement of Case + 6 Years Recommend: Settlement of Case + 7 Years. If litigation involves a child then retain record until the Childs 25th birthday or the recommended period whichever is the longer
Commercial	Process of managing, undertaking or defending for or against commercial litigation on behalf of the local authority	Commercial Litigation file, Officer reports	Statutory Settlement of Case + 6 Years Recommend: Settlement of Case + 7 Years.
Criminal	Process of managing, undertaking or defending for or against criminal litigation on behalf of the local authority	Criminal litigation file	Statutory Settlement of Case + 6 Years Recommend: Settlement of Case + 7 Years. If litigation involves a child then retain record until the Childs 25th birthday or the recommended period whichever is the longer
Conveyancing	Process of agreeing terms between organisations (Not including contractual agreements)	Conveyancing files	Closure Date + 12 Years

Markets

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Customer Application	Process for applying for a market stall	Market and Farmers Market stall application form and associated records	Closure of account +6 years
Parking	Process for applying for market parking	Parking application form	Closure of account +6 years
Accidents	Reporting of accidents	Accident book	Adult: Accident date +3 years (Adults) Child: Until their 21st Birthday RIDDOR Report and Investigations 12yrs

Operational Services

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Waste Bins	Waste Bins; delivery, exchange, collection, assisted collections, missed collections, complaints, enquiries.	Name, address, contact, request details.	Close of request +6 years
Waste and recycling collections	Bulky waste collections	Name of the property owner, the address and contact details	Close of request +6 Years
Pest Control	Pest Control Request	Name, contact details etc.	1 Year
Fly Tipping	Fly tipping removal request	Contact details	Close of request +6 Years
Fixed Penalty Notice	Littering Fixed Penalty Notice	Name, address, contact details etc	Close of request +6 Years
Customer Feedback	Customer Feedback	Names, feedback details etc	Close of request +6 Years
Leisure	Bookings for Leisure activities	Name, contact details	Close of request +6 Years
Abandoned vehicle removal	Abandoned vehicle removal	Notification notice of removal	Disposal +7 Years
Arboriculture, Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleansing	Requests - Arboriculture, Grounds Maintenance, Street Cleansing	Name, address, contact, request details.	Close of request +6 years

Parking

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Car Parking Enforcement	Processing off street civil parking enforcement Issue of penalty Charge Notices	Penalty Charge notices	Closure of case +6 Years
Car Parking Enforcement	Off street civil parking enforcement actions / penalty charge notice processing	vehicle details, challenges, names appeals addresses (Held by Stoke City Council not by SBC)	Closure of case +6 Years
Parking season ticket and permit processing and administration (Internal)	Car parking season ticket and permit processing and administration	Processing of season tickets and permits. Provided by Taranto Limited	End of permit period + 6 Years
Processing complaints	Parking complaints, enquiries, insurance claims	Name, address, complaint etc	Closure of case +6 Years

Partnerships and Community Safety

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Community Safety	Recording of Vulnerabilities Hub actions	Vulnerabilities Hub Actions	Case Closure +6 Years
Community Safety	Safeguarding Referrals	Safeguarding database/forms	Case Closure +6 Years
Community Safety	Domestic Homicide Reviews	Domestic Homicide Reviews case notes	Case Closure +6 Years
Community Safety	Prevent Referrals	Prevent database/forms	Case Closure +6 Years
Community Safety	CSE Panel Reviews	agenda/minutes	Case Closure +6 Years
Community Safety	AntiSocial Behaviour	Processing of ASB cases including record logs	Case Closure +6 Years

Planning - Development

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Planning application Processing	Planning appeals + decision notices on planning applications	Correspondence in tel numbers, addresses , email addresses. Photographs of site if private, application forms.	Closure date + 6 Years
Planning application Processing	Records relating to planning appeals + decision notices on planning applications	Application, representations and objections correspondence.	Permanently
Planning Enforcement	Process of enforcing building or land regulations	Enforcement notices including photos, witness statements, investigation.	Compliance + 10 years
Trees	Records containing reference to listed tree-life	Tree works - tree preservation order	Permanently
Trees	Records containing reference to listed tree-life	Tree works - Tree preservation order enquiries	Closure date + 6 Years

Planning - Strategic

Scope	Description	Examples	Retention
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	Representations to CIL Draft Charging Schedule at pre-examination and examination stages	Representations, comments received via consultation	Financial year of date of adoption plus 6 years
CIL additional information, CIL Liability, CIL exemptions, CIL Relief, CIL Commencement Notice etc	Planning appeals and decision notices on planning applications	Signatures of applicants, other parties and signatories	Closure date + 6 Years
Application Certificate of Lawful Use or Development	Application Certificate of Lawful Use or Development Enquiry - 'is this building activity allowed' or immune from enforcement	Records relating to the Lawful Development Certificate. May contain various evidence including tax receipts etc	Closure date + 6 Years
Section 106 Agreements	Section 106 Agreement documentation	Signatures of applicants, other parties and signatories	Permanently
Section 106 Agreements	Planning obligation or legal agreement made under section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1980	Correspondence between CCDC and applicants. Photographs of site if private.	Closure date + 6 Years
Forward planning	Planning policy consultation database	Database of all consultees for local plan development	Retain unless removal requested or address no longer operational
Forward planning	Local plan documents	Representations received	Financial year of date of adoption plus 6 years
Forward planning	Natural environment	Process of maintaining the countryside and developing open spaces for public amenity	Closure Date + 7 Years
Forward planning	Economic Strategy / Plan	Activities that develop a vision and strategic direction regarding existing and future land use within the local authority	Until superseded + 6 years