

Document Retention and Disposal Policy



1.0 Policy Scope

This policy and standards apply to all information held by Salisbury District Council and its partners and service providers, where they are processing information on behalf of the Council.

It supports our Data Protection Policy and assists us in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and in particular, the Code of Practice on the Management of Records under section 46 of that Act.

1.1 Aims and Objectives

It is recognised that information is a vital corporate asset of Salisbury District Council. We depend on reliable, up-to-date information systems to support the work that we do and the services that we provide to citizens. This policy and standards will help us to:-

- ❑ Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public.
- ❑ Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations.
- ❑ Save our employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily. This will assist them as they carry out their daily duties, or if searching for information requested under information access legislation such as the Freedom of Information Act.
- ❑ Minimise the administrative overhead to the Council and save money in terms of storage costs where hard copy information is taking up office space and electronic documents are using excessive storage capacity on computer equipment such as network servers.
- ❑ Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

1.2 Policy Statement

Salisbury District Council will ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary, and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its statutory functions and the provision of services.

1.3 Standards

The Council will make every effort to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:-

- ❑ Adhere to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule at Annex A. This document provides a framework for the legal and good practice requirements for retaining information.

- Appropriately dispose of information that is no longer required, in accordance with the Council's Retention Schedule. A record of the destruction of records showing their reference, description and date of destruction will be maintained, and steps will be taken to prevent informal, ad hoc "weeding" or disposal of information.
- Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed.
- Records will be kept of reviews, decisions on disposals and justification for further retention, once the statutory or internal periods for the retention of information have passed.
- Information about identifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes. This information will only be held if it meets the following conditions:-
 - that the information is not processed to support decisions about the individuals to whom the information relates, and
 - that substantial damage or substantial distress is not likely to be caused to them.

1.4 Breach of Policy and Standards

Any employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy and Standards may, depending on the circumstances of the case, have disciplinary action, which could include dismissal, taken against them.

1.5 Responsible Officer

The Corporate Information Manager has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy.