Retention of Documents and Records Management

Loughton and Great Holm Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council. This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited.

Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically. A small percentage of the Parish Council's records may be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with overall responsibility for this policy is the Parish Clerk. The person responsible for records management will give guidance for good records management practice and will promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and timely. Individual staff and employees must ensure that records for which they are responsible are accurate, maintained and disposed of in accordance with the Parish Council's records management guidelines.

The retention schedule lays down the length of time which the record needs to be retained and the action which should be taken when it is of no further administrative use. Members of staff are expected to manage their current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different kinds of retention periods when they are creating new record keeping systems.

Record Management table

Document	**Minimum Retention Period**	**Reason**
Signed Minutes of Council Meetings	Indefinite	Legal requirement under the Local Government Act 1972 schedule 12 para 41
Agendas	Indefinite	To support the minutes

Correspondence & papers on important local issues & activities	6 years	For reference
Invoices	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
Paid cheques	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
VAT records	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
Pension records	Two years after the former employee dies	Recommendation from SLCC
Management finance & payroll scale of fees and charges	5 Years	Recommendation from SLCC
Management receipt and payment accounts	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
Archive accounts/ financial annual return	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
Receipt books of all kinds	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
VAT bank statements (including deposit/ savings accounts)	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
Bank paying-in books	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
Cheque books stubs	Ten years	Potential for VAT inspections
Audit budgetary control papers	5 years	Recommendation from SLCC
Quotations and Tenders	4 years	Reference only
Routine correspondence, papers & emails	2 years	Reference only
Contracts	Six years after the contract has ended	Should a claim be brought under that contract
Hand written notes from meetings	Once typed up and the typed notes are approved at the next available meeting	These are not the legal record of the meeting.

Insurance policies - Certificate of Employers Liability	21 years	Should a claim arise
Insurance claim records	7 Years after all obligations are concluded (allowing for claimant to reach age of 25)	Should a claim arise
Health & Safety accident books	25 years from closure	Should a claim arise
Management premises inspection records	25 years from closure	Should a claim arise
Management risk assessments	25 years from closure	Should a claim arise
Management equipment inspection	25 years from closure	Should a claim arise
Timesheets	2 years	For a comparison of sickness and absence
Management of personnel/human resources application forms (interviewed - unsuccessful)	6 Months	Should a claim arise
Personnel files (not payroll information)	For 6 years after the employment ends	Should a claim arise
Title deeds, leases, agreements and correspondence	Whilst the council owns or occupies the land	Not required after the council is no longer owning or occupying the land
Social media messages	3 months	Only relevant whilst being dealt with
Allotment plot holders register	1 year	Only current records required. No need to keep data longer than required.
Members Register of Members Interests	Destroy after member ceases to be a councillor	Only current records required. No need to keep data longer than required.

Press releases	2 years	Reference only
Surveys & returns	Until project completed	Only current records required. No need to keep data longer than required.
Newsletters etc. from other bodies	Retain as long as useful	Used for reference purposes and advice
Planning applications	Not retained past one year	Held by Planning Authority
Parish Council newsletters	Three years	Reference only

Policy Adopted: April 2021

Last Revised and Approved: June 2025 (FC109/25), July 2026 (FC134/26)