

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

2 JUNE 2011

SUBJECT:	DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DESTRUCTION POLICY
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	FINANCE AND BEST VALUE
KEY DECISION?	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to amend the Document Retention and Destruction Policy which was last revised in September 2009. It is good practice to review policies at least every two years. Revisions to this policy have been subject to extensive consultation with all Departments between December 2010 and March 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree the revised Document Retention and Destruction Policy.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 By agreeing this policy the Council demonstrates commitment to the good management of records, and compliance with information governance. By reviewing the policy at least every two years the Council can be assured that changes in legislation and guidance on best practice are taken account of in an effective manner. The policy was reviewed by the Information Manager and the Records Manager in consultation with all Departments between December 2010 and March 2011.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Council records are a vital information asset and a valuable resource to both staff and the public. This policy ensures that information held by the Council can continue to be accessed easily and efficiently, and where it is not needed then it can be destroyed lawfully and in a timely manner.

- 4.2 The full policy can be found at the Web Library on the Intranet Meetings and Minute site and includes the detailed schedules and operational guidance to managers across the Council.

Summary of key Changes to the Policy

4.3 Adult Social Care

4.3.1. New entries to the policy:-

- (a) Financial assessments of people who receive support to be retained in Records Management for eight years after provision of their support has ended.
- (b) Information relating to the financial protection of people who receive support to be retained for eight years in Records Management after their support has ended.
- (c) Case files relating to the safeguarding of adults to be retained in Records Management for eight years after the last contact or case closure.

4.3.2. Amendments to the policy

- (a) All records that were previously stored in Assessment and Care Management Team premises are to be transferred to the Records Management facility in the Cheshire Lines Building.

4.4. Community Safety

4.4.1 New entry to the policy

- (a) Case files and electronic evidence including interview records, legal orders, incident diary sheets and information provided by other agencies to be retained in the Family Safety Unit for twelve months and then transferred to the Records Management Service and destroyed eleven years from case closure or 25 years from case closure if the incident involves children.

4.5. Children's Social Care

4.5.1. New entries to the policy:-

- (a) Records relating to individual requests to access their records and trace their natural birth parents including details of counselling to be retained for 100 years from the date of adoption
- (b) Diaries for social services staff to be retained for six years. These are not covered by the existing policy.

- (c) Documentation informing the development of a young person's Substance Misuse Plan to be retained permanently.
- (d) Reports and Personal Education Plans supporting the education of looked after children to be retained for 100 years from the child's date of birth or 15 years if the child dies before the age of 18.

4.5.2. Amendments to the Policy

- (a) All records that were previously stored in operational teams are to be transferred to the Records Management facility in the Cheshire Lines Building.
- (b) Complaints records of a general and relatively insignificant nature to be destroyed after six years of the case closure. (Previously two years).

4.6. **Democracy**

4.6.1. Amendments to the policy

- (a) Register of gifts and hospitality offered to Members to be destroyed six years after the Member leaves office. (These were previously retained permanently).
- (b) Records relating to Member disclosure of any involvement in organisations and income received from other bodies, which may affect their actions as Council Members to be destroyed six years after the Member leaves office (These were previously retained permanently).

4.7. **Economic Development**

4.7.1. Amendments to the policy

- (a) Information relating to European Funding streams, advice to businesses, business awards, grants to voluntary sector and joint working to be retained in Records Management for 20 years. (previously seven years).

4.8 **Regeneration**

4.8.1. Amendments to the policy

- (a) Information relating to Community and Regional Development, grants, initiative projects, Local Agenda 21 and Town Centre Management case files to be retained in Records Management for 20 years. (previously seven years).

4.9 Tourism

4.9.1. Amendments to the policy

- (a) Tourism development and market research records to be retained in Records Management for 20 years. (previously seven years).

4.10. Education and Skills

4.10.1 New entries to the policy

- (a) Individual files on children's achievements and details of portfolio work to be transferred to the parents
- (b) Applications for nursery education to be retained for seven years after the child has left the setting.
- (c) Contact details of children in an education setting to be retained in Records Management for 50 years after closure of the setting
- (d) Records of accidents relating to children in education settings to be retained in Records Management for 25 years from the child's date of birth, or seven years from the incident date if the accident relates to an adult.
- (e) Case files for children supported through the ESF Wirral Wise or Wirral Apprenticeship Programmes be retained in Records Management for six years from the child's 18th birthday or seven years from the provision of the support whichever is the later.

4.10.2 Amendments to the policy

- (a) Data relating to attendance and truancy to be retained in Records Management for six years from the child's 18th birthday. (This was previously three years)
- (b) Action Plans in schools to be retained in the School's office and then offered to the Archives Service when the plan is no longer operational

4.11 Financial Records

4.11.1 New entries to the policy

- (a) Direct Debit mandates to be retained in Records Management for seven years from the date of the last payment.

4.11.2 Amendments to the policy

- (a) Fraud prosecution files to be retained in Records Management for six years after the conclusion of the matter (whichever is the later of disciplinary, appeal, or court case). (previously six years after the investigation).
- (b) Invoices to be scanned and deleted seven years after conclusion of the transaction. ERDF invoices to be retained for 20 years after the last financial claim.
- (c) Insurance claims to be retained electronically on the Figtree Claims Database for seven years after the claim is settled, or if the claimant is under the age of 18, for three months after the date of their 21st birthday

4.12. **Leisure and Culture**

4.12.1 Amendments to the policy

- (a) General enquiries relating to the service to be retained in Records Management for six years from the enquiry closure. (previously two years)
- (b) Contractual information relating to artists performing in local venues to be retained in Records Management for seven years after the event. (previously stored in the relevant facility offices)

4.13. **Planning and Building Control**

4.13.1 New entries to the policy

- (a) Applications for Listed Building Consent for alterations, extension, or demolition to be retained permanently by the Archives Service
- (b) Documentation relating to housing, employment, leisure and retail development to be held permanently, electronically in the Archives Service.

4.13.2 Amendments to the policy

- (a) Development Plans to be retained permanently in the Archives Service, except for consultation of planning schemes which shall be retained in Records Management for 15 years after the planning decision

4.14 Transport and Infrastructure

4.14.1 New entries to the policy

- (a) Documents relating to the design, maintenance and demolition of bridges, coastal structures, and retaining walls to be retained in Records Management for two years after the life of the asset.
- (b) Photographs of transport infrastructure and street lighting to be retained permanently in the Archives Service
- (c) Documents relating to Enforcement undertaken under the Highways Act to be retained in Records Management for three years after the last action, or seven years if the action resulted in prosecution

4.14.2 Amendments to the policy

- (a) Documentation relating to the design and construction of roads and highways to be retained in Records Management for twelve years after completion of the maintenance, (previously retained permanently)
- (b) Road Safety awareness meeting minutes to be retained in records Management for seven years after the file closure (previously retained permanently)
- (c) Information relating to Traffic Management to be retained electronically in Records Management for seven years. (previously retained permanently)
- (d) Information relating to Transport Planning to be retained permanently by the Archives Service
- (e) Transport modelling (Employer Travel Plans School Travel Plans) information to be retained in Records Management and reviewed seven years after the project closure. (These were previously destroyed after five years)

5.0. RELEVANT RISKS

- 6.1 Failing to keep abreast of good practice and changes to relevant legislation could lead to a reduced quality of service and expose the Council to risks associated with the poor management of records.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 No other option is available for consideration

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There has been consultation with all Departments on revisions to this policy between December 2010 and March 2011.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are none directly.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 There are no additional resource implications identified in this report. Good records management avoids the unnecessary build-up of redundant information, confusion with back-office systems and the operational inefficiencies this may cause.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The policy is based on current legal, financial and other regulatory requirements as well as best practice in this area.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed?

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Only keeping the records for as long as they need to be kept, and in an appropriate storage media, means that filing space is kept to a minimum which has positive carbon implications.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no specific planning implications.

FNCE/88/11

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Document Retention and Destruction Policy

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet	3 September 2009