**Caerphilly Town Council**

**Document Retention and Disposal Policy**

**Introduction**

The Town Council accumulates a large amount of information in hard paper form or electronic form. File records are created and maintained and should be safeguarded. However information should only be retained where it is essential and for the correct amount of time. If documents are destroyed prematurely the Town Council could face prosecution for not complying with legislation and it could cause operational difficulties, reputational damage, and difficulty in defending any claim brought against the Town Council. Timely disposal should be undertaken particularly of personal information to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations. Periodic purge will help to manage the efficient use of limited storage space.

**Objectives of the Policy**

The purpose of the Policy is to determine which documents are:

* Retained – and for how long
* Disposed of – and by what method

There are some records that do not need to be kept such as catalogues, trade journals, electronic mail unrelated to council business, duplicated and superseded material.

**Document Disposal Protocol**

Documents should be reviewed in accordance with the following:

* Is retention required to fulfil statutory or other regulatory requirements
* Is retention required to meet the operational need of the service
* Is retention required to evidence events in the case of dispute
* Is retention required because the document or record is of historic interest or intrinsic value

Documents can be disposed of by:

* Non confidential records – place in waste paper bin
* Confidential records, including personal information – shred documents
* Deletion of computer records
* Transmission of records to County Archives

Records should be maintained of appropriate disposals and contain the following information:

* The name of the document destroyed
* The date the document was destroyed
* The method of disposal

**Data Protection Legislation**

The data protection acts require that personal information must not be retained longer than is necessary for the purpose for which it was originally obtained. Personal information is data that relates to a living individual who can be identified form the data; or from those data and other information which is the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of the data controller.

The Town Council is responsible for ensuring compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations namely:

* Personal data is processed fairly and lawfully
* Personal data shall only be obtained for specific purposes
* Personal data shall be adequate, relevant, but not excessive
* Personal data shall be accurate and up to date
* Personal data shall not be kept longer than is necessary
* Personal data shall be processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject
* Personal data shall be kept secure

**Scanning of Documents**

In general once a document has been scanned on to a document image system the original becomes redundant. However original documents required for VAT and tax purposes need to be retained for six years.

**List of Documents**

The appendix lists Town Council documents retention periods and disposal methods.

Adopted September 2023