



## Wells City Council

### Data Retention Policy

#### Document No.13

<b>Purpose</b>	Guidance to clarify Wells City Council's policy regarding data retention
<b>Additional Papers</b>	To be read in conjunction with the Freedom of Information Policy
<b>Reviewed by</b>	Full Council
<b>Adopted</b>	April 2026
<b>Review Date</b>	April 2027

## 1. Introduction

Wells City Council (herein referred to as “the Council) issues this policy to meet the requirements incumbent upon them under the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 for the handling of personal data in its role as a data controller.

## 2. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all employees of the Council including contract, agency and temporary staff, volunteers and employees of partner organisations working for the Council.

## 3. Review Statement

This Policy has been prepared considering prevailing legislation and recognised good practice. New legislation requirements or changes in current legislation may necessitate the review of this policy document. The Council will continue to review and amend all/part of this policy on a regular basis. It is the employee’s responsibility to ensure that the copy of the policy being referred to is the most up-to-date version.

## 4. Equality

In putting this procedure into practice, no aspect of the procedure will discriminate on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, religion, politics, marital status, disability, union membership or any other grounds likely to place an employee at disadvantage.

## 5. Retention

In line with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. The Council will keep some forms of information for longer than others. Information will not be kept indefinitely unless there are specific requirements.

**Appendix B** gives a detailed breakdown of timescales for the retention of various types of information.

## 6. Disposal

When data is no longer required it should be appropriately destroyed.

The Council will either use an accredited confidential waste disposal provider, or it will shred the information using a cross-cut shredded. Information on what should be deemed as confidential waste is detailed in **Appendix A**.

## 7. Monitoring and Compliance

Compliance with this policy shall be monitored through a review process. This will be agreed with the Data Protection Officer, and compliance will be reported to the Finance Committee

Should it be found that this policy has not been complied with, or if an intentional breach of the policy has taken place, the organisation, in consultation with senior management, shall have full authority to take the immediate steps considered necessary, including disciplinary action.

## Data Retention Policy, Appendix A

### What is Confidential Waste?

A record can be in any format including paper, post it notes, disks, CD's, tapes, posters etc. Waste that should be disposed of confidentially includes:

- (1) Any record which details personal information which
- Relates to and identifies a living person
  - Could help someone identify a person when used with other information
  - Is an expression of opinion about an individual
  - Indicates out intentions towards an individual

E.g. name, address, date of birth, email, phone numbers, location data, IP addresses.

- (2) Any record which details special categories of personal data including

- Racial and/or Ethnic Origin
- Political Opinions
- Religious Beliefs (or other beliefs of a similar nature)
- Trade Union membership
- Biometric Information e.g. Photos
- Mental or Physical Health condition
- Sexual life and Orientation
- Criminal Records (actual or suspended)

E.g. Safeguarding, Accident/First Aid, Equalities information, Legal records.

- (3) Any record which details business/commercially sensitive information such as

- Information which Wells City Council would be affected by any less of, or unauthorised access t.

E.g. Contracts, opinions on a service delivery, tender information.

If you have any doubt then please treat the information as Confidential.

## Data Retention Policy, Appendix B

List of documents for retention or disposal

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Minutes	Indefinite	Archive	Original signed paper copies of council minutes of meetings must be kept indefinitely in safe storage. At regular intervals of not more than five years they should be archived
Agendas	Five years	Management	Bin (shred confidential waste)
Accident/incident reports	20 years	Potential claims	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of GDPR
Scales of fees and charges	Six years	Management	Bin
Receipt and payment accounts	Indefinite	Archive	N/A
Receipt books of all kinds	Six years	VAT	Bin
Banking statements including deposit/savings accounts	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
Bank paying-in books	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
Cheque book stubs	Last completed audit year	Audit	Confidential waste
Quotations and tenders	Six years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
Paid invoices	Six years	VAT	Confidential waste
Paid cheques	Six years	Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste
VAT records	Six years generally but 20 years for VAT on rents	VAT	Confidential waste
Petty cash, postage, and telephone books	Six years	Tax, VAT, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste
Timesheets	Last completed audit year Three years	Audit (requirement)	Bin

<b>Document</b>	<b>Minimum Retention Period</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Disposal</b>
Wages books/payroll	12 years	Personal injury (best practice) Superannuation	Confidential waste
Insurance policies	While valid (but see next two items below)	Management	Bin
Insurance company names and policy numbers	Indefinite	Management	N/A
Certificate for insurance against liability for employees	40 years from date on which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1988 (SI 2753) Management	Bin
Play areas equipment inspection reports	21 years		
Investments	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
Title deeds, leases, agreements, contracts	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
Members' allowances register	Six years	Tax, Limitation Act 1980 (as amended)	Confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
Information from other bodies e.g. circulars from county associations, the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), principal authorities	Retained for as long as it is useful or relevant		Bin
Local/historical information	Indefinite – to be securely kept for benefit of the Parish	Councils may acquire records of local interest and accept gifts or records of general and local interest in order to promote the use for such records (defines as materials in written or other form setting out facts or events or otherwise recording information)	N/A

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Magazines and Journals	Wells City Council may wish to keep its own publications For others retain for as long as they are useful and relevant.	The Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 (the 2003 Act) requires a local council which after 1 February 2004 has published works in print (this includes a pamphlet, magazine or newspaper, a map, plan, chart or table) to deliver, at its own expense, a copy of them to the British Library Board (which manages and controls the British Library). Printed works as defined by the 2003 Act published by a local council therefore constitute materials which the British Library holds.	Bin if applicable
<b>Record-keeping</b>			
To ensure records are easily accessible it is necessary to comply with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A list of files stored in cabinets will be kept</li> </ul> Electronic files will be saved using relevant file names	The electronic files will be backed up in a cloud-based programme as appropriate.	Management	Documentation no longer required will be disposed of, ensuring any confidential documents are destroyed as confidential waste. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
General correspondence	Unless it relates to specific categories outlined in the policy, correspondence, both paper and electronic, should be kept. Records should be	Management	Bin (shred confidential waste) A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR.

	kept for as long as they are needed for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests.		
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<b>Document</b>	<b>Minimum Retention Period</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Disposal</b>
Correspondence relating to staff	If related to Audit, see relevant sections above. Should be kept securely and personal data in relation to staff should not be kept for longer than is necessary for the purpose it was held. Likely time limits for tribunal claims between 3-6 months. Recommended time period be for three years.	After an employment relationship has ended, a council may need to retain and access staff records for former staff for the purpose of giving references, payment of tax, national insurance contributions, pensions, and in respect of any related legal claims made against the council	Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR.

**Documents for legal matters, negligence, and other torts**

Most legal proceedings are governed by the Limitation Act 1980 (as amended). The 1980 Act provides that legal claims may not be commenced after a specified period. Where the limitation periods are longer than other periods specified, the documentation should be kept for the longer period specified. Some types of legal proceedings may fall within two or more categories. If in doubt, keep for the longest of the three limitation periods.

Negligence	Six years		Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR.
Defamation	One year		Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR.
Contract	Six years		Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR.

Document	Minimum Retention Period	Reason	Disposal
Leases	12 years		Confidential waste
Sums recoverable by statute	Six years		Confidential waste
Personal injury	Three years		Confidential waste
To recover land	12 years		Confidential waste
Rent	Six years		Confidential waste
Breach of trust	None		Confidential waste
Trust deeds	Indefinite		N/A
<b>For Halls, centres, recreation grounds</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application to hire</li> <li>• Invoices</li> </ul> Record of tickets issued	Six years	VAT	Confidential waste A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR.
Lettings diaries	Electronic files linked to accounts	VAT	N/A
Terms and conditions	Six years	Management	Bin
Event monitoring forms	Six years, unless required for claims, insurance or legal purposes	Management	Bin. A list will be kept of those documents disposed of to meet the requirements of the GDPR
<b>For allotments</b>			
Register and plans	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
Minutes	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
Legal papers	Indefinite	Audit, management	N/A
<b>For burial grounds</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Register of fees collected</li> <li>• Register of burials</li> <li>• Register of purchased graves</li> <li>• Register/plans of grave spaces</li> <li>• Register of memorials</li> <li>• Application for interment</li> </ul>	Indefinite	Archives, Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (SI 204)	N/A

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application for right to erect memorials</li> <li>• Disposal certificates</li> <li>• Copy certificates of grant of exclusive rights of burial</li> </ul>			
<b>Document</b>	<b>Minimum Retention Period</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Disposal</b>
<b>Planning papers</b>			
Applications	One year	Management	Bin
Appeals	One year unless significant development	Management	Bin
Trees	One year	Management	Bin
Local development plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Bin
Local plans	Retained as long as in force	Reference	Bin
Town/neighbourhood plans	Indefinite – final adopted plans	Historical purposes	N/A
<b>CCTV</b>			
Daily notes	Daily	Data protection	Confidential waste
Radio rotas	One week	Management	Confidential waste
Work rotas	One month	Management	Confidential waste
Observation sheets	Three years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Stats	Three years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Signing in sheets	Three years	Management	Confidential waste
Review requests	Three years	Data protection	Confidential waste
Discs – master and working	For as long as required	Data protection	Confidential waste
Internal Operations Procedure Manual	Destroy on renewal Review annually	Management	Confidential waste
Code of Practice	Destroy on renewal Review annually	Management	Confidential waste
Photographs/digital prints	31 days	Data protection	Confidential waste