

NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Adopted by Northam Town Council on **22nd October 2025**

	Name	Signature
Mayor	Cllr Louis Bach	
Town Clerk	Guy Langton	

NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

The Town 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 Town Council.

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Version	Date	Note	Drafted by
V0.1	12 th September 2025	First draft for review by committee	Town Clerk
V0.2	18 th September 2025	Minor typographical amendments	Town Clerk after Review Committee 18.9.25

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Town 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 Town Council.

1.2 This document provides the policy framework through which this effective management can be achieved and audited. It covers:

- Scope
- Responsibilities
- Retention Schedule

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

2.1 This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Town Council in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Town Council and which are thereafter retained (for a set period) 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 Town Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

2.2 This policy has been drawn up within the context of:

- Freedom of Information
- General Data Protection Regulation

and with other legislation or regulations (including audit and Statute of Limitations) affecting the Town Council.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Town Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment.

3.2 The person with overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Town Clerk, and the post holder is required to manage the Council's records in such a way as to promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriately and in a timely manner.

4. RETENTION SCHEDULE

4.1 Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Town Council is required to maintain a retention schedule listing the record series which it creates during its business. 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.

4.2 The Town Clerk is expected to manage the current record keeping systems using the retention schedule and to take account of the different retention periods when creating new record keeping systems. This retention schedule refers to record series regardless of the media in which they are stored.

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4.4 Planning applications are retained by Torridge District Council and Devon County Council. There is no requirement to retain duplicates locally. All Town Council recommendations in connection with these applications are recorded in the Council minutes and are retained indefinitely.

4.5 Correspondence received in connection with applications will be retained as stated above (see Correspondence)

4.6 All documents that are no longer required for administrative purposes will be shredded (if confidential) or recycled waste.

Document	Minimum Retention	Reason
Minute books /electronic minutes	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Accounts	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Audit Returns	Indefinite	Archive
Bank Statements	7 years	Audit and management
Cheque book stubs and paying in books	7 years	Management
Quotations and tenders	7 years	Audit
Paid invoices	7 years	Audit
Receipts	7 years	Audit
VAT records	7 years	Audit
Salary, Tax and NI Records	7 years	Audit
Employee Records	2 years after leaving	Audit
Period of employment details	7 years	Audit
Pension information	13 years	Audit
Employee and Councillor travel and expenses claims	7 years	Audit
Insurance policies	During validity	Audit
Insurance claims	7 years after completion	Audit
Certificate of Employers Liability	40 years	Audit, legal and statutory compliance
Certificate of Public Liability	40 years	Audit, legal and statutory compliance
Council policies	Current version – while valid Previous versions – until one year after they have been superseded	Audit and management
Asset register	Indefinite	Audit
Deeds and Leases	Indefinite	Audit

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Declaration of acceptance of office and register of interests	Term of office plus one year	Management
Complaints	1 year	Management
General information	3 months	Management
Routine correspondence and emails	6 months after relevant issue is completed	Management
Public consultations, surveys and returns	7 years	Management

Documentation for legal purposes (unless extended)		
Negligence	6 years	Limitation Act (1980) – as amended
Defamation	1 year	Limitation Act (1980) – as amended
Contracts / Agreements	6 years	Limitation Act (1980) – as amended
Sums recoverable	6 years	Limitation Act (1980) – as amended
Rental agreement	12 years	Limitation Act (1980) – as amended
Personal injury	3 years	Limitation Act (1980) – as amended
To recover land	12 years	Limitation Act (1980) – as amended
Rent	6 years	Limitation Act (1980) – as amended