

East Cowton Parish Council

Records Management Policy

Adopted Date: 9th November 2020

1 Introduction

1.1. The guidelines set out in this document support the East Cowton Parish Council Data Protection Policy and assist in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR) and other associated legislation.

1.2. It is important that East Cowton Parish Council has in place arrangements for the retention and disposal of documents necessary for the adequate management of services in undertaking its responsibilities. This policy sets out the minimum requirements for the retention of documents and sets out the requirements for the disposal of documents. However, it is important to note that this is a live document and will be updated on a regular basis.

1.3. East Cowton Parish Council will ensure that documents and data are kept only so long as is necessary in order to comply with legislation, prove ownership, protect itself against legal action or to properly carry out its functions or provide services.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1. It is recognised that up to date, reliable and accurate information is a vital to support the work that East Cowton Parish Council does and the services that it provides to residents.

This document will help to:

- Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for the Council to operate and provide services to the public.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the GDPR.
- Save employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.

- Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

3. Scope

3.1. For the purpose of this policy, 'documents' includes electronic, microfilm, microfiche and paper records.

3.2. Where storage is by means of paper records, originals rather than photocopies should be retained where possible.

4. Standards of good practice

4.1. East Cowton Parish Council will make every effort to ensure that it meets the following standards of good practice:

- Adheres to legal requirements for the retention of information as specified in the Retention Schedule at Annex A.
- Retains personal information securely within the Clerk's home, and access to these documents will only be by authorised personnel.
- Retains disclosure information securely in the Clerk's home
- Appropriately disposes of information that is no longer required.
- Takes appropriate measures to ensure that confidential and sensitive information is securely destroyed. (Information about unidentifiable individuals is permitted to be held indefinitely for historical, statistical or research purposes eg. Equalities data.)
- Wherever possible retains only one copy of any personal information and that will be held securely within the Clerk's home.

Commented [A1]: See report about security.

5. Breach of Policy and Standards

5.1. Any employee who knowingly or recklessly contravenes any instruction contained in, or following from, this Policy may, depending on the circumstances of the case, have disciplinary action, which could include dismissal, taken against them.

5.2. Where there is a breach of the policy, the Council may need to consider whether there is also a breach of the GDPR.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. East Cowton Parish Council Clerk has responsibility for implementation of the policy under delegation of East Cowton Parish Council

6.2. East Cowton Parish Council Clerk is responsible for the maintenance and operation of this policy including ad-hoc checks to ensure compliance.

7. Retention

7.1. Timeframes for retention of documents have been set using legislative requirements, guidance from the National Association of Local Councils and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Professional Development (CIPD).

7.2. Throughout retention the conditions regarding safe storage and controlled access will remain in place.

7.3. The attached 'Appendix' shows the minimum requirements for the retention of documents as determined by East Cowton Parish Council for the management of specific documentation types. Officers holding documents should exercise judgement as to whether they can be disposed of at the end of those periods detailed in the attached 'Appendix'

7.4. The normal retention period is regarded as 6 years as provided under the Statute of Limitations plus 1 year for issue/service of any writ/summons (where appropriate) but there are exceptions. A full list of retention periods is appended.

7.5. The Council will as appropriate (and not less than 25 years after its creation) lodge any archive material required to be stored indefinitely with the North Yorkshire County Council Records Office.

8. Disposal

8.1. Documents containing personal data no longer required by East Cowton Parish Council for administrative purposes must be shredded and deleted entirely and securely from the East Cowton Parish Council computer system.

8.2 Within 8 weeks of the end of the financial year East Cowton Parish Council Clerk should conduct a check to ensure that all personal data, where the retention period expired in that financial year, has been destroyed.