

# CORPORATE POLICY

## RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSAL SCHEDULE

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## **Who and what is this Records Retention & Disposal Schedule for?**

All employees of Aberdeen City Council (ACC), its 3rd party contractors and Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOS) need information and records every day in order to do their jobs – the Council cannot function or meet its objectives without it. This Policy is not just for those working on or assigned information and records management roles, it is for all Council staff, for every role, at every grade, in every part of the Council.

The Council deliver a wide range of services to our citizens throughout their lives; from registering a birth, to educating and protecting children, through to supporting vulnerable people to live as independently as possible. These services touch every aspect of our citizens' lives, from the environment we live in, to the roads we drive on, and the community facilities we all access. The Council's management of information and records are fundamental to ensuring that we are accountable for the services we deliver in a way that reflects our duty of care as a public authority to our citizens and stakeholders now and in the future. This is essential for:

- Making informed decisions based on accurate, good quality and up to date information;
- Explaining and evidencing why we have made a particular decision or carried out a particular action in a particular way at a particular time;
- Promoting democracy and protecting the rights of our people and our organisation.

This Records Retention & Disposal Schedule policy sets out:

- Corporately agreed retention and disposal periods (how long we need to keep our information and records) which is mapped to our corporate Business Classification Scheme;
- Corporately agreed retention and disposal actions (how we dispose of our information and records when they are no longer needed).

This Policy should be read as part of the broader Information and Records Lifecycle Management Policy, including the Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

## Why do we need a Records Retention & Disposal Schedule?

Under the terms of the Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011, the Council has a statutory duty to manage its information and records appropriately. Having in place and being able to evidence the use of a Corporate Records Retention and Disposal Schedule is a key element of fulfilling this duty whilst being compliant with other related legislation such as Data Protection and Freedom of Information. The Council has in place an Information and Records Lifecycle Management Policy which sets out the Council's commitment to the proper management of our information and records throughout their lifecycle.

The [Records Retention & Disposal Schedule](#) will enable the Council to implement the appropriate and consistent retention and disposal of its information and records across the organisation. The adoption and implementation of this Records Retention and Disposal Schedule will allow the Council to mitigate the risks of both:

- **Disposing of information we still need.** Disposing of information and records we still need means that the Council will not have the information and records we require to undertake our core business. It also means that we will be unable to explain and evidence the decisions we have made, which will mean that the Council cannot be accountable to our stakeholders. In some cases, it may also mean that the Council are in breach of our statutory obligations.
- **Keeping information and records which we no longer need.** Keeping information for longer than we need it makes it harder to find information and records we need to carry out business. It also cost the Council money, whether it is held in hard copy or in electronic format. In some cases, keeping information too long may also mean that the Council is in breach of our statutory obligations.

Managing the retention periods of our information and records enables us to protect the rights of our citizens, our staff and the organisation and actively demonstrate the importance and value we place on our duty of care and accountability.

## **How does it work and how will we make it happen?**

Every Council team will manage the retention and disposal of their information and records, regardless of the technical or physical format or age of the information or record, in accordance with the corporate Records Retention & Disposal Schedule. This includes but is not limited to paper records, email, spreadsheets, and data in business systems, audio and video recordings and web pages. The Records Retention and Disposal Schedule is aligned to the corporate Business Classification Scheme framework which each service area can evidence through the creation and maintenance of a Service File Plan and Disposal Register.

Overall governance and strategic responsibilities for this policy are assigned to the Council's Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO). All activity relating to this policy and will be monitored, actioned and reported on to the SIRO through the Information and Records Lifecycle Management Project Board and Information Management Governance Group. Information Asset Owners and Administrators will be responsible for ensuring all staff understand and act in accordance with their responsibilities outlined in this policy.

## **APPROVAL OF POLICY**

The Records Retention and Disposal Schedule will be maintained, developed and kept up-to-date with any legislative or business change requirements. This policy will be reviewed annually in conjunction with the Corporate Information and Records Lifecycle Management Policy to ensure that it meets business and accountability requirements and measurable standards of good practice.