

INFORMATION RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Background

In order to operate effectively, and meet statutory obligations for information management including compliance with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, public authorities are required to maintain efficient record management systems that protect the integrity of their information and assist with its storage and efficient retrieval. CPA records include both hard copy documents and electronically held information.

Records need to be identified, categorised and risk assessed to determine the appropriate retention periods for all classes of information held by the organisation. Specified retention periods for each category of information held are important to provide a consistent policy which ensures that the system of management of records supports the business effectively.

Once agreed, appropriate guidelines for staff and members regarding the maintenance of the systems, including procedures for the retention and disposal of records, when implemented effectively, will ensure that the integrity of the information system is maintained and its goals achieved.

Objectives

To define an appropriate framework for the management of information in order to ensure that:

- a) Vital information which is needed to operate effectively is protected
- b) Information is retained no longer than is necessary
- c) Information that is no longer required is disposed of in an appropriate manner
- d) Clear guidance is provided on the retention and disposal of specific and general categories of information
- e) Legal and statutory obligations are met.

Successfully ensuring information is correctly retained and disposed will result in:

- A clear audit trail of decisions
- Reliable records of information
- Statutory and legal requirements being met
- Minimised risk of delay/failure to meet FOI requests
- Reduced time consumed locating information held.

Policy Review 2011

In August 2011, a comprehensive review of information held was matched against guidelines from local authority sources, including, 'Retention Guidelines for Local Authorities, 2002'. For relevant categories of records, a risk assessment was carried out informed by 5 years experience of business operations and the frequency of generation, and need for storage and retrieval of records. This enabled pragmatic decisions to be taken concerning appropriate retention periods for this business which balance legal, financial and administrative requirements.

The key components of the information system are:

- a comprehensive Retention and Disposal Schedule (see Appendix A) which identifies the retention periods for specific and general categories of information, and archive arrangements
- a 'Disposal Register' which will continue to be maintained, clearly identifying the title of the disposed document, when it was disposed of and why, and
- a procedure for maintaining and updating the system, communicating guidelines, and archive.

Procedure

The Business Support Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy along with the ongoing maintenance of the Retention and Disposal Schedule and Disposal Register. As living documents these will be reviewed at regular intervals. Requests for new information classes should be directed to the Business Support Manager.

Staff and members will be issued with guidance as part of the Handbook and will share responsibility for maintenance of records and systems within their areas of operation to assist with effective operations.

Once the administration requirement has finished, as indicated by the Schedule, the permanent documents are to be transferred to the place of deposit (the assigned archive facility).

Appendix A

DOCUMENT RETENTION PERIODS

Documentation	Retention Period
DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES	
Full Police Authority/Committee Meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bound Minute Books • Handwritten Notes from Meetings 	Permanent Dispose once minutes approved at next meeting
Partnership, Agency and External meetings; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process and resolutions (Minutes held permanently with owning local body) 	3 years after last action
Corporate Planning and Reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Reports • Annual Statement of Accounts • Policing Plans • Police Authority/local policing body Annual Reports • Departmental strategic processes and resolutions (OD Plan) 	Permanent Permanent Permanent 1 year after year of publication 3 years after last action
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	
Accounts and Audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditors Reports/Final Letters • Audit of Accounts • General Audit Correspondence 	6 years + current 6 years + current 2 years + current
Financial Transactions Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Monitoring • Invoice copies 	6 years + current 2 years + current
HUMAN RESOURCES	
Appointments - Chief Officers and Chief Executives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful • Unsuccessful 	6 years from date of last pension payment 2 years after appointment of successful candidate
Appointments – Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful • Unsuccessful 	6 years + current 2 years after appointment of successful candidate
Personnel administration – Officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Officers Pay (PNB Related) • Medical Appeal files • Personal Development Reviews (ACPO) • Police Appeal Tribunals • Police Pension papers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific cases ○ General Correspondence/circulars 	2 years 6 years from date of last pension payment 6 years from date of last pension payment 6 years from date of last pension payment 6 years from date of last pension payment 2 years + current
Personnel administration – Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Spreadsheets • Committee Membership 	6 years + current 6 years + current

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correspondence re Allowances • Expense claims • Gifts and Hospitality Records • Personal Development Reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Notes of Meetings ○ Records of Development • Register of Interests • Related Party Transactions Disclosures 	6 years + current 6 years + current 6 years + current 6 years + current 6 years + current 6 years + current 6 years + current
Termination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismissal of ACPO 	6 years. If pension is paid, 6 years from date of last pension payment
Training and Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training records - Members 	6 years + current
INSPECTIONS	
HMIC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection Reports • Annual Reports • Thematic Inspection Reports • General Correspondence 	7 years 7 years 7 years 2 years + current
LEGAL & CONTRACTS	
Litigation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process and management of cases 	7 years after last action
Contract management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Level Agreements • Compliance Reports • Performance Reports 	2 years after contract expiry 2 years after contract expiry 2 years after contract expiry
MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION	
Circulars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA • Home Office 	2 years + current 2 years + current
Correspondence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APA • Chairman and Members • General 	2 years + current 2 years + current 2 years + current
Complaints against: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Officer by Members of Public • Police Authority • Members 	6 years 6 years 6 years
Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Summary of findings 	Until recorded on Summary of Findings 5 years after closure
Information Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Retention and Disposal Register 	Permanent
Independent Custody Visiting Scheme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Reports • Visitors correspondence • Expenses Claims 	2 years + current 3 years + current 6 years
Marketing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and campaigns 	2 years
Media: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports 	2 years

Policy, Procedures, Strategy and Structure development Monitoring and review	Permanent 5 years from closure
Publications: • All	Permanent (one copy)
Quality and performance management: • Monitoring and review	5 years after closure

