

Gedling Borough Council

Records Management Policy

Introduction

The Council holds a large amount of information to enable it carry out its functions. This information may relate to specific topics or individuals, and it includes records kept by the Council of decisions made and actions taken and the reasons for them.

The Council recognises that records are a key resource for its efficient operation and accountability and that it is important to ensure all the information held is managed effectively and that the staff understand their responsibility for records management.

Gedling Borough Council understands that its keys aims are supported by the effective management of its records with due regard to legal obligations and professional standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all the Council's records. A record is defined as any recorded information regardless of the medium on which it is held. It includes paper, microfiche/film, electronic and audio-visual, email or any other medium, whether or not it is in an organised filing system.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that Gedling Borough Council manages its records to meet the demands of both its business and all applicable legislation.

To achieve this aim the Council requires a records management framework; this includes the ability to create or acquire information (in whatever format) and to demonstrate the accuracy and reliability of its records and evidences its accountability for its decisions and actions.

Policy Statement

This Council is committed to the creation, storage, management and eventual disposal of records which document the functions and activities of the organisation for as long as they are required.

In support of the Council's strategic plan this will result in more accessible records and increased clarity for residents about the information held by the Council. In ensuring that this information is available the Council supports active participation in civic and community activities.

Definition of roles and responsibilities in Records Management

- Overall responsibility – Chief Executive
- Departmental – Heads of Service are responsible for the management of their records in accordance with this policy and for ensuring all relevant staff are trained effectively and fully aware of the records management procedures.
- All employees will be responsible for creating and maintaining records in relation to their work that are accurate and complete.

Training and Awareness

All staff will need to understand the need for records management; these will mainly fall into two categories: - those who are responsible for creating, maintaining and using records will be trained in record management and everyone else made aware of record management issues.

Records Creation and Record Keeping

Each department will identify and have in place a well-structured record keeping system that documents its activities and provides for quick and easy access for any related information.

Each record must be authentic, reliable, complete and useable and the systems that support them must prove their integrity over time. There will also be procedures to protect records against unauthorised addition, deletion, alteration, use or concealment.

A record must be an accurate and factual account of an event or transaction. It should not include irrelevant or derogatory personal comments or opinions about an individual.

Record Maintenance

The record keeping system will be maintained so that records are properly stored and protected and can easily be located and retrieved. This will include:

- Ensuring that suitable storage accommodation is provided for the records.
- Monitoring the movement and location of records so that they can be easily retrieved and that there is an audit trail.
- Controlling access to the information.

Retention

Retention periods will be determined and documented for all records. These should be based on statutory requirements, codes of practice or good practice recommendations from professional and other bodies. Where there is no such guidance it is the responsibility of the relevant Head of Service to determine a suitable retention period. An agreed retention schedule will be in place and updated regularly.

Record Disposal

At the end of the retention period, the record must be assessed to determine whether it is necessary to retain it for a further period. Records subject to an ongoing Freedom of Information/Data Protection request must not be destroyed until the end of the period in which an appeal can be made.

Once it has been determined that a record is no longer required, it must be securely disposed of in accordance with the departmental disposal procedure.

Documentation of the disposal of records must be completed and retained.

Access

Requests for access to information should be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Freedom of Information and Data Protection policies.

Performance Measurement

The application of the records management procedures will be monitored against both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Those managers responsible for the management of their records in accordance with this policy will carry out compliance audits which will be monitored periodically.

Review of Policy

This policy statement will be subject to review at least every 3 years and will be amended and reissued as necessary. Should amendments be required Members and Officers will be notified accordingly.