



REPORT of DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

**to
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE
30 JANUARY 2018**

DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the draft Document Retention Policy, attached as **APPENDIX 1** to this report, and recommend the adoption of this policy to the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

To the Council

That the Document Retention Policy, attached at **APPENDIX 1**, be approved.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Council's documents are its corporate memory, supporting its core functions and providing evidence of actions and decisions. They are a vital corporate asset, enabling effective management and compliance with statutory and regulatory obligations.
- 3.2 Documents can be physical or digital records. This policy applies to all 'Documents'.
- 3.3 Storage space within the basement and at the Princes Road depot is nearing full capacity and there is little free space.
- 3.4 The Document Retention Policy provides a framework to govern management decisions on whether a particular document (or set of documents) should either be retained and if so for what period; or disposed of, and if so by when.
- 3.5 The Policy seeks to ensure:
- a degree of consistency in the management of records across the Council;
 - records of long term value are identified and preserved;
 - random destruction of records is avoided;
 - documents are kept for the optimum length of time;
 - that the Council complies with legal, audit and operational requirements affecting the retention of documents;

- 3.6 The Council must ensure its Document Retention Policy is in compliance the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), which come into force in May 2018.
- 3.7 The Policy (**APPENDIX 1**) is supported by the following two appendices.
- 3.8 **Appendix A** is the Checklist of key disposal / retention considerations. Essentially a document should not be disposed of unless the checklist has been considered in relation to the document.
- 3.9 **Appendix B** is the Document Retention Schedule. The Schedule is the accepted local authority tool for the management of documents and records. Based on work by the Records Management Society, as well as organisational requirements and common practice, it provides guidance on recommended and mandatory minimum retention periods for specific classes of document. It is proposed that given the operational nature of the Schedule it shall be reviewed and updated as and when changes in legislative or regulatory requirements dictate, outside the formal periodic review of the Policy itself. This schedule must be rigorously enforced by managers. *Due to the size of document, a copy of this is available for viewing in the Members' Room.*

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 That adoption of this policy will ensure a more efficient use of physical and electronic storage capacity.

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

- 5.1 An adopted policy setting out the Council's approach to effective document management is in part a matter of compliance with legal and regulatory obligations and is also linked to high level outcomes associated with the corporate goal of delivering good quality, cost effective and valued services in a transparent way.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – No direct impact arising from this report but adoption of the Policy provides customer reassurance that effective document management is incorporated into the Council's working practices.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Failure to have an up-to-date policy having regard to current statutory and regulatory requirements could potentially leave the Council open to challenge. Documents may be kept too long; or indiscriminately destroyed; or disposed of without documented evidence of what has been destroyed, or documents with long-term value may not being preserved.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Failure to have an up to date policy having regard to current statutory and regulatory requirements could potentially leave the Council open to challenge. Documents may be kept too long; or indiscriminately destroyed;

or disposed of without documented evidence of what has been destroyed, or documents with long-term value may not being preserved.

- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – The introduction of GDPR brings significant increases in the penalties which can now be imposed for data breaches or non-compliance. Penalties can be levied up to £17million or 4% or turnover.

Retaining documents longer than required will not only be in breach of GDPR, but also brings with it additional storage costs, whether in physical or digital storage.

- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – By retaining documents longer than is necessary, the resulting work required in searching, checking and administering Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulation requests can have an impact on staff resources.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – No impact arising from this report.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Emma Foy, Director of Resources, (Tel: 01621 875762).