Information & Records Management Policy

1. Introduction

Information is a valued corporate and public asset. It is a key resource required to deliver the Council's business objectives and to meet the expectations of our customers. The Council is committed to creating, keeping and managing records which document its activities to a standard appropriate to meet its business purposes and the requirements of information legislation. The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for managing the Council's information to enable the Council to:

• deliver quality services by having timely access to meaningful and appropriate information;

• make informed decisions;

• be open and transparent;

• respond appropriately to information requests from the public;

• protect vital records;

• comply with the law;

• work with partners;

• protect our reputation and provide accountability over time.

2.0 Information Management Principles

The Council will ensure that:

• We manage information effectively as a strategic Council resource. Information regardless of where it is held, is a corporate resource and hence the property of BTC and not the property of individual employees or Councillors.

 • We are all responsible for the Council's information assets.

Those with specific responsibility for managing information assets must be clearly identified. However, all users are responsible how they use information;

• We share information (responsibly) with our colleagues and members.

Staff should be able to access information for the effective performance of their role and there should be the opportunity for the free flow of information, as appropriate, across BTC;

• We protect information, especially personal information, which cannot be shared for legal reasons, e.g. in relation to privacy, security or due to commercial sensitivity;

 • We maintain our information in compliance with our statutory obligations. Information management must comply with prevailing legislation, information must be managed in accordance with BTC policies, standards and procedures and information must be kept secure as appropriate;

• We keep adequate records of what we do, and retain them in the most cost effective way.

3.0 Scope of the policy

This policy applies to all employees, elected members, and anyone working for or on behalf of the Council who create and manage records on the Council's behalf or have access to Council records.

The policy applies to information in all formats, whether paper, electronic or audiovisual. It includes emails produced or received in the conduct of business and records managed on behalf of the Council by an external body.

4.0 Relationship with existing policies

This policy has been formulated within the context of the following Council documents:

- Data Protection Policy
- Information Security Policy
- Communications Policy
- Data Retention Policy
- Clear Desk Policy

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for ensuring

• this Policy is implemented in their work areas;

• appropriate staff are identified to assist with the implementation and compliance measurement of the Policy;

• new and existing staff are made aware of the requirements of the Policy and receive appropriate training in respect of its implementation.

The Council uses the services of an external Data Protection Officer to oversee GDPR compliance and will review this annually.

The IT Officer will oversee the document storage within SharePoint. The IT Officer will ensure systems are in place for data back-up and the ability to restore lost information.

Individual staff have a personal responsibility to ensure that they maintain their data within the 365 environment.

6. Creation and maintenance Information

Users will:

• create, keep and manage records that document the Council's principal activities; • maintain all records the Council requires for business, regulatory, legal and accountability purposes. The requirements for different classes of records are documented in the Data Retention Policy

 • create records with meaningful titles and indexes/metadata so that they can be retrieved quickly and efficiently.

 • make sure our records are authentic, reliable, have integrity and remain usable. This includes making appropriate arrangements for ensuring the continuity and availability of information when staff leave, or during major organisational or technological change.

7. Storage

To maximise efficiency, reduce costs, enable sharing and minimise risks, Information users will:

• store all information in the BTC 365 System e.g SharePoint, OneDrive

• store information securely, appropriate to its classification;

• avoid storing duplicates (e.g. avoid paper/electronic overlaps, e.g. store a single copy of electronic information to be shared through use of links) and routinely destroy unnecessary information (in accordance with the retention policy);

• not store information permanently on removable media (e.g. DVDs and flash drives).

8. Destruction

The Town Council will use an appropriate waste management service for the secure destruction of paper documents. Appropriate documentation will be retained to evidence this.

Permanent digital deletion is built within the 365 system. Users must ensure they employ good practise with regards to document retention within the system.

Appropriate deletion from redundant equipment will be carried out and a record kept of these measures.

This policy was:
Approved by the Council on 01/12/20