



Howden Town Council

Data Protection Policy Document

Introduction

Howden Town council is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (“the Act”), which came into force on 1st March 2000. The Council will therefore follow procedures that aim to ensure that all employees, elected members, contractors, agents, consultants or partners of the Council who have access to any personal data held by or on behalf of the Council, are fully aware of and abide by their duties and responsibilities under the Act.

Statement of policy

In order to operate efficiently, Howden Town Council has to collect and use information about people with whom it works. These may include members of the public, current, past and prospective employees, clients and customers, and suppliers. In addition, it may be required by law to collect and use information in order to comply with the requirements of central government. This information must be handled and dealt with properly, however it is collected, recorded and used, and whether it be on paper, in computer records or recorded by any other means. The Council will ensure that it treats personal information lawfully and correctly.

The Council will appoint a Data Protection Officer – this will be the Clerk.

The Council fully endorses and adheres to the Principles of Data Protection as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

The principles of data protection

The Act states that anyone processing personal data must comply with eight principles of good practice. The principles are legally enforceable.

The principles require that personal information:

- Shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met.
- Shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes.
- Shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which it is processed.
- Shall be accurate and where necessary, kept up to date.
- Shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes.
- Shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Act

- Shall be kept secure i.e. protected by an appropriate degree of security
- Shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of data protection.

The Act provides conditions for processing any personal data. It also makes a distinction between personal data and 'sensitive' personal data.

Personal data is defined as data relating to a living individual who can be identified from:

- That data;
- That data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of the data controller and includes an expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the data controller, or any other person in respect of the individual.

Sensitive personal data is defined as personal data consisting of information as to:

- Racial or ethnic origin;
- Political opinion;
- Religious or other beliefs;
- Trade union membership;
- Physical or mental health or condition;
- Sexual life;
- Criminal proceedings or convictions.

Handling of personal/sensitive information

Howden Town Council will:

- Observe fully conditions regarding the fair collection and use of personal information;
- Meeting its legal obligations to specify the purpose for which information is used;
- Collect and process appropriate information only to the extent that it is needed to fulfil operational needs or to comply with an legal requirements;
- Ensure the quality of information used;
- Apply strict checks to determine the length of time information is held;
- Take appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information;
- Ensure that personal information is not transferred abroad without suitable safeguards;
- Ensure that the rights of people about whom the information is held can be fully exercised under the Act. These include:
 - The right to be informed that processing is being undertaken.

- The right of access to one's personal information within the statutory 40 days.
- The right to prevent processing in certain circumstances.
- The right to correct, rectify, block or erase information regarded as wrong information.

In addition, Howden Town Council will ensure that:

- There is someone with specific responsibility for data protection in the organisation.
- Everyone managing and handling personal information understands that they are contractually responsible for following good data protection practice.
- Everyone managing and handling personal information is appropriately trained to do so.
- Methods of handling personal information are regularly assess and evaluated.
- Data sharing is carried out under written agreement, setting out the scope and limits of the sharing. Any disclosure of personal data will be in accordance with the Act.

All elected members are to be made fully aware of this policy and of their duties and responsibilities under the Act.

All Howden Town Council employees will take steps to ensure that personal data is kept secure at all times against unauthorised or unlawful loss or disclosure and in particular will ensure that:

- Paper files and other records or documents containing personal/sensitive data are kept in a secure environment;
- Personal data held on computers and computer systems is protected by the use of secure passwords, which where possible have forced changes periodically;
- Individual passwords should be such that they are not easily compromised.

All contractors, consultants, partners or other servants or agents of the Council must:

- Ensure that they and all of their staff who have access to personal data held or processed for or on behalf of the Council, are aware of this policy and are fully trained in and are aware of their duties and responsibilities under the Act. Any breach of the Act will be deemed as a breach of any contract between the Council and that individual, company, partner or firm.
- Allow data protection audits by the Council of data held on its behalf (if requested).
- Indemnify the Council against any prosecutions

Adopted by Town Council October 2017