

## **Privacy Notice – Revenues & Benefits**

### **Why we collect information about you?**

We collect and hold information about you, and those in your household, to administer Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payment, Former Tenant Arrears and Sundry Debts, to enable the assessment of your liability and entitlement; including discounts and/or exemptions; the collection and enforcement of outstanding debts such as unpaid Council Tax, Housing Benefit overpayments, Former Tenant arrears and other debts.

In order to carry out statutory duties and obligations it may be necessary, depending on the service area, for us to collect personal information from you which may include your name, address, contact details and other supporting personal information, such as; employment details, proof of earnings, confirmation of address, rent liability details, national insurance number, bank details, etc., (the list is not intended to be exhaustive).

### **How will we use the information we hold about you?**

We will collect information about you for:

- The administration and collection of Council Tax/Business Rates;
- The assessment of your entitlement to Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support;
- Administration and collection of outstanding funds owed to the Council;
- Where the processing is necessary to comply with legal obligations, for example; the prevention or detection of crime including fraud;
- The protection of public funds.

### **What is the basis for us to process your data?**

The basis for processing the data is:

To fulfil our legal obligation under the following legislation:

- Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992
- Local Government Finance Act 1992
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Localism Act 2011
- Social Security Contribution & Benefits Act 1992

- Housing Benefit Regulations 2006
- Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations 2006
- Council Tax Support Reduction Scheme
- The prevention and detection of crime, including false representation in accordance with the Fraud Act
- Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme (Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001).

### **Who we will share your information with?**

We will share information with other organisations where it is necessary, either to comply with a legal obligation, or where permitted under Data Protection legislation, for example where sharing is necessary for us to carry out the Council Tax function or if there is a public interest to do so such as the prevention and / or detection of crime. This could include the need to disclose sensitive or confidential information such as medical details to other organisations.

We may share information that is given to us with other organisations that inspect or handle public funds to prevent and detect fraud including:

- Department for Works and Pensions
- HM Revenues and Customs
- National Audit Office
- Office of National Statistics
- The Cabinet Office
- The Police
- Other Council Services and Local Authorities
- HM Courts and Tribunal Service
- The Valuation Office Agency
- Insolvency Service
- Enforcement Agents acting on behalf of the authority
- Locta
- Pan Essex
- Datatank Ltd

The Cabinet Office is responsible for the National Fraud Initiative which carries out data matching exercises. Matching is also carried out with other Essex Local Authorities under Pan Essex, as part of an anti-fraud initiative, data is sent to Locta which allows Local Authorities to trace forwarding addresses on debtors who have moved out of the district, and data is also sent to Datatank Ltd who are a service provider for Epping Forest District Council and carry out a council tax discount & empty review. Data matching is comparing

computer records held by one organisation with other computer records held by the same organisation or a different one. This is usually personal information. Computerised data matching allows us to identify applications, claims and payments that may be fraudulent. A match means that there is an inconsistency between the sets of records that need investigating.

We may also share your information with other organisations that carry out work for the Council, for example to print documentation such as bills, invoices or notification letters. Where this occurs, the Council will have entered into a Data/Information Sharing Agreement with that organisation, to safeguard your data.

### **Other ways we may use your details**

We may also use your customer details within the Council for

- Keeping the Register of Electors up to date;
- Licensing private taxis and private rented properties;
- Collecting debts owed to the Council;
- To carry out compliance checks and validations for Council services;
- Other services areas within the Council where the law allows or requires it, or to improve the services you receive

This means we may share your information with enforcement agents and/or debt management organisations engaged by us and the Her Majesty's Courts Service in relation to outstanding money owed. It may also be necessary to share your information with credit reference agencies to help prevent and detect fraud and to confirm who is resident at an address.

The Council may utilise the services of credit agencies, such as CallCredit, Experian, for validation and tracing purposes and to help determine the best course of recovery action.

### **How long do we keep your records?**

We will only keep your information for the minimum period necessary. The information outlined in this privacy statement will be kept after all action on your account has finished and the period required by the Council for legal or audit purposes has passed. Information will be held securely and will be securely destroyed when it is no longer required.

Please see the link to the council's data retention policy for Revenues and Benefits at <https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Revenues-and-Benefits-Retention-Policy-V2.pdf>

**For further information:**

For details regarding your rights under Data Protection law or how to make a complaint if you think we have mishandled your personal information, please visit:

[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

For further free independent advice regarding your rights contact the Information Commissioner's Office at <https://ico.org.uk/>

**Changes to this Privacy Notice:**

The Council keep this privacy notice under regular review. This privacy notice was last updated on 13 September 2023.