

MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME FOR LOCAL COUNCILS

1. This is a model publication scheme for parish, town and community councils (known collectively as local councils) in England and Wales. Local councils are first tier of local government. There are over 10,000 such councils in England and Wales and they have a wide range of powers at their disposal.

The purpose of the scheme is to be a means by which local councils can make a significant amount of information available routinely, without waiting for someone to specifically request it. The scheme is intended to encourage local councils to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness and transparency.

2. In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the scheme specifies the classes of information which local councils publish or intend to publish. Bearing in mind local councils are so diverse in size and functions it was decided the most practical approach was that the model scheme should firstly be comprised of a number of core classes of information which are mandatory. However, it also includes a number of documents (within those core classes) as well as a group of totally new optional classes. Any optional documents within a core class of information are clearly specified therein. The idea behind such an approach is that councils can incorporate the optional documents and classes as they see fit to reflect the information they provide to the general public on a local basis. It is not however, a prerequisite that a council adopts any of the optional documents or classes. The intention behind the inclusion of optional classes and documents is to add a degree of choice and flexibility in the scheme.

In some cases a class of information sets out a range of information which is excluded from the publication. Where that is the case the reasons behind the decision to exclude are clearly stated. Excluded throughout the model scheme is general correspondence sent or received by councils and all information relating to private individuals by virtue of it being personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.

In certain classes a limitation of age of some documents has also been stipulated. For the avoidance of doubt this does not mean information beyond that date cannot be obtained, it simply indicates that it is not available as a matter of course within the model publication scheme.

3. The information contained in each class will be available in a variety of formats namely in hard copy on request from the clerk of the council, by inspection at the council office or other suitable premises by prior appointment or, where a council has a website some of the information may be available thereon.
4. Reasonable charges may be raised for the provision of copies of the documents/information listed in each of the classes.

The classes are as follows:-

CORE CLASSES OF INFORMATION

1) COUNCIL INTERNAL PRACTISE AND PROCEDURE

Minutes of council, committee and sub-committee meetings - limited to the last 2 years. Procedural Standing Orders Councils Annual Report to Parish Meeting

Optional documents:-

Agendas and supporting papers for council, committee and sub-committee meetings-limited in each case to the forthcoming/immediate meeting. Terms of Reference for Committees

2) CODE OF CONDUCT

Members Declaration of Acceptance of Office
Members Register of Interests Register of
Members Interests Book

3) PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW

This is information concerning changes to the electoral arrangements for parish, town and community councils. It includes recommendations for the creation of new wards, the amendment of existing wards, proposals for the names of new wards and alterations to the number of councilors to be elected to the council.

4) EMPLOYMENT PRACTISE AND PROCEDURE

Equal Opportunities Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Staffing Structure

Exclusions of personal records i.e. appraisals, employee specific salary details, disciplinary records, sickness records and the like by virtue of being personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998

5) PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Responses to planning applications

6) AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS

Annual return form of limited to the last financial year Annual Statutory report by auditor (internal and external) of limited to the last financial year Receipt/Payment

books, Receipt books of all kinds, Bank Statements from all accounts ó limited to the last financial year Precept request ó limited to the last financial year VAT records ó limited to the last financial year Financial Standing Orders and Regulations Assets register ó this will include details of commons/village greens owned by the council including management schemes for common as well as village halls, community centers and recreation grounds. Risk Assessments

Exclusions ó all commercially sensitive information e.g. quotations and tenders, loan documentation and insurance policies. With regard to quotations and tenders, this information is treated as confidential to insure that the whole tender process is fair i.e. if tender information is released to a third party prior to the end of the tender period those who initially submitted tenders could be undercut and/or unfairly disadvantaged.

OPTIONAL CLASSES OF INFORMATION

7) DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

Policy Statements issued by council responses made by council to consultation papers
Analysis of responses received to public consultations by the council Village
Appraisal Complaints handling procedure

8) BYELAWS

Made for any of the following purposes:-

The regulation of a mortuary and post mortem room The regulation of a pleasure ground
The regulation of any baths, swimming pool, bathing place or wash-house
The regulation of the hiring of pleasure boats in a park or pleasure ground provided by a council
To control dogs and dog fouling

9) COUNCIL CIRCULAR/NEWSLETTERS

Town, parish, community guide History of town, parish or community (or similar commissioned publication)

10) ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & TOURIST INFORMATION-

This relates only to information produced by the council.

11) ALLOTMENTS

Plans Standard Tenancy Agreements

Exclusions ó individual tenancy agreements and rent payments records under both privacy and data protection laws