

REPORT FOR POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE 10TH DECEMBER 2008

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – PUBLICATION SCHEME

1. Under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Town Council was required to adopt a Publication Scheme. Initially, it was intended that the scheme would have to be re-adopted on a regular basis.
2. The Information Commissioner's office has now updated the Publication Scheme. Under the new arrangements, the Council is required to adopt a Model Publication Scheme before 1st January 2009, together with a supporting Schedule of Information available.
3. The Town Council is not entitled to change the Model Publication Scheme and it must be adopted in the form issued by the Information Commissioner's office. The supporting schedule is intended to show details of the information available and where and how members of the public can view or obtain that information.
4. Attached to this report as Appendices A and B are the Model Publication Scheme and the Information Schedule. The latter document has been completed to show how members of the public can view or obtain each type of document referred to therein. The Publication Scheme and the Information Schedule will be placed on the website in a manner which will allow users to simply click on the particular part of the Information Schedule and gain direct access to the document required. As time permits, more documents will be added to the website, so that everything will be available from that source.
5. The Town Council is now required to formally adopt the Model Publication Scheme and the Schedule of Information available.
6. The Committee is asked to recommend to Council that :-
 - i) the Publication Scheme and Schedule of Information available from the Town Council, as set out at Appendices A and B, be adopted with effect from 31st December 2008; and
 - ii) That the Town Clerk be authorised to make such amendments as may be necessary to the Schedule of Information available at such times as more information is added to the Council website.

For further information, please contact :

Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Tel : 01425 473883

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

PUBLICATION SCHEME

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

Classes of Information

Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists and Registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

The Services we Offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written Requests

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

This publication scheme was adopted by Ringwood Town Council at a meeting of the Council on 17th December 2008.

Information available from Ringwood Town Council under the model publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<p>Class1 - Who we are and what we do (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)</p> <p>This will be current information only</p> <p>N.B. Councils should already be publishing as much information as possible about how they can be contacted.</p>		
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Staffing structure	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet

Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit) Current and previous financial year as a minimum		
Annual return form and report by auditor	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Finalised budget	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Precept	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Borrowing Approval letter	N/A	
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Grants given and received	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)	(hard copy or website)	
Parish Plan (current and previous year as a minimum)	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free £10

Annual Report to Parish or Community Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Quality status	Not adopted	
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	None	
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions)	(hard copy or website)	
Current and previous council year as a minimum		
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Minutes of meetings (as above) – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Reports presented to council meetings - nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Responses to consultation papers	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Responses to planning applications	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10 per sheet
Bye-laws	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet

<p>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</p> <p>Current information only</p>	(hard copy or website)	
<p>Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:</p> <p>Procedural standing orders Committee and sub-committee terms of reference Delegated authority in respect of officers</p> <p>Code of Conduct</p> <p>Policy statements</p>	<p>Website Website Hard copy from Town Clerk</p> <p>Website Hard copy from Town Clerk</p> <p>Hard copy from Town Clerk</p>	<p>Free Free 10p per sheet</p> <p>Free 10p per sheet</p> <p>10p per sheet</p>
<p>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</p> <p>Internal policies relating to the delivery of services</p> <p>Equality and diversity policy</p> <p>Health and safety policy</p> <p>Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)</p>	<p>Hard copy from Town Clerk</p> <p>Hard copy from Town Clerk</p> <p>Hard copy from Town Clerk</p> <p>Website Hard copy from Town Clerk</p>	<p>10p per sheet</p> <p>10p per sheet</p> <p>10p per sheet</p> <p>Free 10p per sheet</p>

Policies and procedures for handling requests for information	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Information security policy	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Data protection policies	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Class 6 – Lists and Registers		
Currently maintained lists and registers only	(hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection)	
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)		
Assets Register	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by parish councils)	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Register of members' interests	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Register of gifts and hospitality	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet

Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)		
Allotments	Website for fees & charges Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Community centres and village halls	N/A	
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Website for fees Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Bus shelters	Hard copy from Town Clerk	10p per sheet
Markets	N/A	
Public conveniences	N/A	
Agency agreements	None	
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees) - Burials, Cremations (Scattering of Ashes), Hiring of Football & Cricket Pitches	Website Hard copies available from Town Clerk	10p per sheet

Additional Information This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above		
Quarterly Newsletter	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet
Student Advisors – contact details and protocol for appointment	Website Hard copy from Town Clerk	Free 10p per sheet

**Contact details: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk, Tel: 01425 473883
or e-mail: Town.Council@ringwood.gov.uk**

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	BASIS OF CHARGE
Disbursement cost	Photocopying @ 10p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Photocopying @ ..p per sheet (colour)	Not available
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 nd class
Statutory Fee		In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)
Other	Town Plan	£10

* the actual cost incurred by the public authority