

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Publication Scheme

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TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – PUBLICATION SCHEME

INCLUDING GUIDANCE ON PUBLICATION SCHEME, CLASSES OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE TO INFORMATION

In implementing the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Test Valley Borough Council promotes an understanding of the work undertaken within the Council to foster a spirit of trust with the public and other organisations. We achieve this by promoting transparency in the way we make our decisions and by providing clear information about our policies and processes through our publication scheme. We deal with individual requests for information courteously and promptly and provide advice and assistance if necessary.

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. It lists exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities.

The Publication Scheme

The Information Commissioner has issued a 'Model Publication Scheme' and from 1ST January 2009 Test Valley Borough Council has adopted the 'Model Scheme'.

The publication scheme commits the Test Valley Borough Council 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 Test Valley Borough Council:

- 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.

The Model Scheme contains 7 classes of information and these are as follows: -

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What our priorities are and how we are doing
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers
- The services we offer

Examples of the type of information available are given below under the Guide to Information.

Requesting Additional Information not Covered by this Scheme

The Council includes as much information in the Publication Scheme as it can however, if you cannot find what you are looking for you can make a request for the information.

The Act is retrospective and information requests can be for information created before the Act came fully in to force in 2005. However, where any of the information comes within an exempt category either under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or other relevant legislation, it will be published with the exempt material deleted.

Charges for Information

Material which is published and accessed on the website can be downloaded free of charge. Some information may only be available in hard copy and some information will only be available for inspection. Charges may be made for information subject to a legal charging regime. Charges under the publication scheme may be made for actual disbursements such as: -

- Photocopying
- Printing
- Postage and packaging
- The cost directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Any charges will be in accordance with the Council's policy.

Contacts within the Council

The information can be found under the Council's website www.testvalley.gov.uk at the following:

<http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/atoz>

For information concerning the scheme or if you wish to make a request for other information you can contact the following:

The Freedom of Information Officer
Legal & Democratic Service

Tel: 01264 368000

foi@testvalley.gov.uk

Making a Complaint, Suggestion or Compliment

If you are not satisfied with the Council's response to a request for information you may make a complaint to the address below: -

Complaints & Improvements Officer
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
SP10 3AJ

complaints@testvalley.gov.uk

If after going through the Council's formal complaint and appeals system you are still not satisfied then the Freedom of Information Act 2000 makes provision for you to complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office: -

Wycliffe House,
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance

If you need help to make a request for information you may contact the following: -

The Freedom of Information Officer
Legal & Democratic Service

Tel: 01264 368000

foi@testvalley.gov.uk

Reviewing and Maintaining the Scheme

This Publication Scheme will be reviewed in accordance with such guidance as is produced by the Information Commissioner and in accordance with Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Copyright

Reproducing material supplied under this Publication Scheme without the express permission of the Council may be an infringement of copyright. Requests for permission should be addressed to:

Communications Manager
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
SP10 3AJ

communications@testvalley.gov.uk

Guide to Information

The Council's A-Z web pages provide a guide to the information available and there is also a search facility to assist you to find other information that may not be included in the A-Z.

The guidance below is intended to assist you by giving some examples of the type of information the Council routinely makes available.

Where a document is indicated within this guidance it will be the current version. This information can be found via the A-Z of services or the search facility on the web site or through the contacts given above.

1 Who we are and What we do

- Council Constitution
- Council democratic structure
 - Information about the functioning and process of meetings (Council Meetings, Executive and other Committees).
 - Information about decision-making and scrutiny.
- Council directorate structure
 - Information about the various directorate areas within the Council, plus contact details for the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors.
- Location and opening times of council properties
 - Information about locations, opening times and contact details of all the Council's centres/buildings, which are there to enable the public to access Council services.

- Currently elected councillors' information and contact details
 - Currently elected councillors including party, membership of committees, address, telephone number and email contact.
- Contact details for all customer-facing departments
 - Telephone numbers for customer contacts or one-stop shops.
- Most recent election results
 - Election results indicating the political composition of the Council.
- Relationships with other authorities
 - The Council works with Hampshire County Council and other local authorities and public bodies within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. If the information required is not available via the Council's web site you should contact:

The Policy Team
 Beech Hurst
 Weyhill Road
 Andover
 SP10 3AJ

ChiefExec@testvalley.gov.uk

2 What we spend and How we spend it

- Financial statements, budgets and variance reports
 - The Council's Statement of Accounts.
- Capital programme
 - The Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan.
- Spending reviews
 - The Council's Statement of Accounts and Committee reports.
- Financial audit reports
 - For example within District Audit Reports, Annual Governance Reports and Best Value Reports.
- The members' allowances scheme and the allowances paid under it to councillors each year
 - For example the allowances members are entitled to claim and the amount each member received in expenses.
- Staff allowances and expenses
 - Mileage, accommodation, subsistence rates that can be claimed by staff.
- Pay and grading structure
 - Salary bands for all grades, including senior and chief officer grades.
- Details of contracts currently being tendered
 - Procurement policies and guidance.
 - Contracts currently available for public tender.
- List of contracts awarded and their value
 - Contracts awarded under the Public Contract Regulations 2006 as published in The Official Journal of the European Union.
- District auditor's reports

- For example within District Audit Reports, Annual Governance Reports and Best Value Reports.
- Financial statements for projects and events
 - The Council's Statement of Accounts.
- Internal financial regulations
 - Financial regulations under the Council's Standing Orders, as contained in the Council's Constitution.

3 What our Priorities are and How are we Doing

- Annual reports
 - The Council's Corporate Plan and Action Plan Update.
- Strategies and business plans for services provided by the Council
 - Strategies, business and service plan for directorates, departments and services including the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan.
- Best value performance plans
 - For example best value performance plans and auditor's reports.
- Internal and external organisation performance reviews
 - Performance information including for example Comprehensive Performance Assessments.
- Strategies developed in partnership with other authorities
 - For example housing strategies and plans, homeless strategies and crime reduction strategies.
- Economic development action plan
 - For example the Council's Long Term Economic Development Strategy.
- Forward plan
 - The Council's Forward Plan which details the Key Decisions that the Council is going to take over a four month period can be found in Cabinet agendas.
- Capital strategy
 - The Council's Capital Programme and Asset Management Plan.
- Best value performance indicators
 - Information about the Council's Best Value Performance Plan and about inspections and annual governance reports.
- District auditor's reports on the best value performance plan and performance indicators
 - For example within District Audit Reports.
- Comprehensive performance assessment
 - Information about Comprehensive Performance Assessment.
- Inspection reports
 - Publicly available inspection reports.
- Local Area Agreements
 - For example partnership agreements made by the Council by working with various groups and partnerships in the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors.
- Statistical information produced in accordance with the Council's and departmental requirements
 - For example information about population and employment.

- Impact assessments
 - Cabinet Reports containing Impact Assessments (such as Equality Impact Assessments).
- Service standards
- Public service agreements

4 How we make decisions

- Timetable of council meetings
 - Committee dates for the current year.
- Agendas, officers' reports, background papers and minutes of council committee, sub committee and standing forum meetings
 - Public information on the Council's decision recording system.
- Major policy proposals and decisions
 - Information on The Council's Forward Plan and via public information on the Council's decision recording system.
- Facts and analyses of facts considered when framing major policies
 - Information on The Council's Forward Plan and via public information on the Council's decision recording system.
- Public consultations
 - Consultation papers or information, any summary of the responses and the outcome of the consultation exercise.

5 Our Policies and Procedures

- Policies and procedures for conducting council business
 - The Council's Constitution.
- Policies and procedures for delivering our services
 - For example the Council's Equalities Scheme.
- Policies and procedures about the recruitment and employment of staff
 - For example employment information, current vacancies, Recruitment Policy, Equalities Scheme.
- Customer service
 - For example Complaints policy.
- Records management and personal data policies
 - For example Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy
- Charging regimes and policies
 - For example Licensing Fees and Charges, Building Control Charges and Local Land Charges.

6 Lists and Registers

Available for inspection only

- Public registers and registers held as public records
 - For example Register of Electors, Register of Premises Licences and Club Premises Licences, Register of Hackney Carriage Drivers.

- Asset registers and information asset register
 - For example the Council's Corporate Asset Management Plan.
- Register of councillors' financial and other interests
 - The Register of Members' Interests in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.
- Licensing, planning, commons, footpaths etc
 - For example Register of Planning Applications.
- Register of electors
 - The Register of Electors and information about the Register and where it can be inspected.

7 Services Provided by the Council

Details of all the Council's Services can be found in the Council's Directory of Services.

- Regulatory and licensing responsibilities
 - For example hackney carriage licensing, amusement licensing, liquor licensing.
- Services for local businesses
 - For example business services and advice in respect of financial support, doing business with the Council and training.
- Services for members of the public
 - Details of all the Council's Services can be found in the Council's Directory of Services.
- Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees
 - For example Licensing Fees and Charges, Building Control Charges, Burial Fees and Local Land Charges.
- Information for visitors to the area, leisure information, events, museums, libraries and archive collections
 - Information about the local area.
- Leaflets, booklets and newsletters
 - Various leaflets and council publications available in council offices etc.
- Advice and guidance
 - For example advice on debts and benefits, consumer advice, affordable housing.
- Media releases
 - Press statements and releases.
- Election Information
 - For example election results, forthcoming elections and voting procedures.