

# Freedom of Information

The Community Council have adopted the 'Model Scheme for Local Council Scheme for Local Councils – Core Classes only'

## **General Information on the 'Freedom of Information Act**

Everyone has the right to request information held by public sector organisations under the Freedom of Information Act.

## **The Freedom of Information Act**

### **The right to see a wide range of public information**

The Freedom of Information Act gives you the right to ask any public body for all the information they have on any subject you choose. Unless there's a good reason, the organisation must provide the information within 20 working days. You can also ask for all the personal information they hold on you.

Everyone can make a request for information – there are no restrictions on your age, nationality, or where you live.

You can ask for any information at all - but some information might be withheld to protect various interests which are allowed for by the Act. If this is case, the public authority must tell you why they have withheld information.

If you ask for information about yourself, then your request will be handled under the Data Protection Act.

## **How to make a request**

Write to (*or email*) the public body and include:

- **your name**
- **an address where you can be contacted**
- **a description of the information that you want**

To help the public body find the information, give as much detail as possible. For example, say 'minutes of the meeting where the decision to do X was made', rather than 'everything you have about X'.

All public authorities must manage their information in accordance with a publication scheme which describes the 'classes' or 'kinds' of information held (*such as minutes or reports*).

### **How long does it take?**

You should get a response within 20 working days. If the public body needs more time, they will write and tell you why, and when you will get their response.

### **What does it cost?**

Most requests are free. You might be asked to pay a small amount for photocopies or postage.

If the public authority thinks that it will cost them more than £450 (or £600 for central government) to find the information and prepare it for release, then they can turn down your request. They might ask you to narrow down your request by being more specific in the information you're looking for.

### **How you receive the information**

When you make a request you can ask that the information is given to you in a particular way. For example, you can ask for paper or electronic copies of original documents or you can ask for a summary of them. You can also ask to inspect specific documents.

However, a public authority may take into account the cost of supplying the information in this form before complying with your request

### **Copyright and restrictions**

If you plan to reproduce the information you receive, make sure you check the copyright status of it first.

### **For more information**

**visit:** [http://ico.org.uk/for\\_organisations/freedom\\_of\\_information/guide](http://ico.org.uk/for_organisations/freedom_of_information/guide)