



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Introduction

Keynsham Town Council issues this policy in response to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). This policy is also aligned to other legislation relating to access to information, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The Council supports the FOIA's key objectives of increasing openness, accountability and transparency in the public sector. The Council recognises that promotion of greater openness and increased transparency in relation to Council decision making will build public trust and confidence in government.

Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of Keynsham Town Council including.

Elected Members, contract, agency and temporary staff, volunteers, and employees of partner organisations working for the Council.

The FOIA applies to all information held by the Council and information held by another person on behalf of the Council, including information held by contractors and partner organisations on the Council's behalf.

Obligations

The FOIA confers a general right of access to information held by public bodies.

Requests for information received in writing must be responded to within 20 working days. Applicants have a right to be informed as to whether the information they have requested is held by the Council, and if so, to have that information communicated to them (subject to certain exemptions).

The FOIA also requires that each public authority adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme which is a structured list of the types of information that a public authority makes available.

Principles

The Council will apply the following basic principles. The Council will ensure that:

- Applicants seeking information are offered advice and assistance
- Requests for information are responded to promptly, and within the statutory timescales
- A presumption in favour of disclosure is applied to all requests for information
- Information is only withheld if a valid exemption applies
- Applicants are kept informed of any delays which their request may be subject to
- Assistance is offered to applicants to help them to understand the information they receive
- Applicants are informed of any charges likely to be levied
- Applicants are advised of their right to an internal review or (where appropriate) their right of appeal to the Information Commissioner if they are dissatisfied with the service received or the response to their request.
- All requests are logged and monitored, and monitoring reports produced on a regular basis to demonstrate compliance with the legislation.
- Training, support and guidance is made available to enable staff to comply with the requirements of this Policy

Charging

The Council will make a reasonable charge for disbursements such as photocopying, printing and postage, where these costs total £10 or more. Photocopying charges will be based on those in place within the Council's Public Libraries.

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 recognises that a public authority is not obliged to comply with a request for information if the process of compliance would exceed the appropriate limit of £450 (18 hours). The process of compliance covers the time it would take to:

- determine whether it holds the information,
- locate the information, or a document which may contain the information,
- retrieve the information, or a document which may contain the information, and
- extract the information from a document containing it,

In exceptional circumstances and at the Council's discretion, requests exceeding the

- extract the information from a document containing it,

In exceptional circumstances and at the Council's discretion, requests exceeding the appropriate limit of £450 may be satisfied. These will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and charged at a rate of £25/hour.

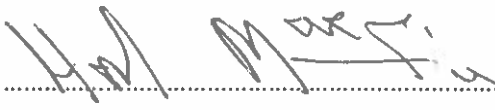
In all cases where a fee is charged, payment will be required in advance of disclosure.

Adopted: Council Meeting 17 October 2023

Minute Number: 12

Review: October 2024

Next review date: October 2026

Signed  Date 15/10/24

Chair of Council

Signed  Date 15/10/24

Town Clerk

