

STRATFORD-ON-AVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Publication Scheme



**Elizabeth House,
Church Street,
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 6HX**

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires all public authorities to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme.

This document is Stratford-on-Avon District Council's scheme under the Act.

Its aim is to let everyone know what information will be automatically, or routinely, published by the District Council. To do this, the Act requires that a scheme contains a list of *classes of information*. The way that we have arranged this in our scheme is to set out seven classes or categories as follows:-

- The Council and its constitution
- Council finances
- Council policies
- Council decisions
- Council performance
- Council services

The rest of this document deals with those classes. In each case, the scheme gives the title of the class, a definition, a brief explanation and finally, a description of how the information can be viewed.

Our intention is to show what information we have, what is included within each category, what it concerns and where it is held. The description of each class also needs to contain any permitted exemptions that might apply; put another way, information that might fall within the broad definition but will **not** be routinely published. It will be seen that under our scheme, this will apply in one case only - to exempt items on agenda papers for meetings as defined by the law.

In preparing this scheme, our paramount regard has been for the public interest. We have taken notice of the sort of information that people normally request of us and of the matters that appear to interest and concern people. We want to contribute to a culture of readily making information available to further the interests of open and accountable local government. In this context, it is important to recognise that we already publish a great deal of information. This process will now be complemented by the right of public access to information that the Freedom of Information Act applies to.

Further, this scheme and the Freedom of Information Act will not *in any way* limit the existing rights that people have to information, nor will there be any prejudicial change to the very large amount of information that we otherwise publish outside the scheme. This means, for example, that planning applications will continue to be available for public inspection.

Further, we will continue to publish a large amount of material by way of guidance or assistance about various services on a routine basis.

It is very important to state, however, that a great deal of the information that we hold is personal and private to individuals.

The relevant legislation here is the Data Protection Act 1998 and the rights given by it will not be compromised by the Freedom of Information Act. The Freedom of Information Act does **not** permit private and confidential information about private arrangements between an individual and the council (such as council tax and benefits) to be made public, although the individual concerned will retain the right of personal access to that information under the Data Protection Act. All of this means that a person's private affairs with the council as an individual are **not** the subject of this publication scheme.

The Council has appointed Liam Nevin, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, as the officer responsible for this scheme on behalf of the Council. He is based at Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6HX (telephone 01789 260400, e-mail: liam.nevin@stratford-dc.gov.uk).

The opportunity to complain to the Council does not prevent any individual from referring a complaint to the Information Commissioner (either about freedom of information or data protection) at the following address:-

Information Commissioner

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow, Cheshire

SK9 5AF

DX: 20819 Wilmslow

Telephone: 01625 545700

Fax: 01625 524510

e-mail: data@dataprotection.gov.uk

website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

It is anticipated that this publication scheme will be reviewed, renewed and re-submitted to the Information Commissioner for approval every three years.

As for the information itself that is retained under each specific class, this will be reviewed, monitored, updated and re-published as required.

The publication scheme will be made available on our website and will be deposited at all of our offices within the district. A copy will also be made available to the County Library Service within the district. In deciding to distribute the scheme this way, we have thought about and tried to accommodate the geographical nature of the district, issues of access and the public interest. It and the information to which it refers are available in the first language of the district, English, but if anyone has any difficulty with this and requires a transcript in another language, they are invited to contact Dave Webb (telephone 01789 260900, e.mail: dave.webb@stratford-dc.gov.uk). This also applies if anyone would like a large print version or otherwise requires specific assistance in a particular way.

No charge will be made for examining the information within this publication scheme on receipt of a request, although a charge may be made for any photocopies that are requested, at rates to be determined by the Council from time to time.

The scheme does not refer to any other executive agencies. This means that the information that it defines and classifies relates **only** to Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Our aim has been to map out the Council's responsibilities under this Act clearly and unambiguously. We have also tried to set out the areas of our day-to-day work by including a class of information that makes reference to our services (with appropriate contacts) in a format that we hope you will find useful.

If you have any suggestions about this scheme (and particularly comments to improve it), please contact Liam Nevin (telephone 01789 260400, e-mail: liam.nevin@stratford-dc.gov.uk).

CLASSES OF INFORMATION

Class 1

- (a) **Title**
Council Constitution
- (b) **Definition**
The Constitution pursuant to the Local Government Act 2000.
- (c) **Explanation**
This is the document that includes all of the rules, Codes of Conduct and workings of the Council, including its contract, financial and other procedures, together with committee and officer structures.
- (d) **Location**
Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Council's website.

Class 2

- (a) **Title**
Council Finances.
- (b) **Definition**
Council Tax Estimates and the Capital Programme for 2002/2003 and succeeding financial years, together with the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2000/2001 and succeeding financial years.
- (c) **Explanation**
The Council's income and expenditure on a service by service basis for the financial year.
- (d) **Location**
Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Council's website.

Class 3

- (a) **Title**
Council Policies
- (b) **Definition**
The policy framework of the Council as defined by the constitution.
- (c) **Explanation**
All Council strategies and policies approved by the Council, either statutory or otherwise. By way of example only, this will include the:-
- Community Plan
 - district-wide Local Plan
 - Crime and Disorder Strategy
 - Asset Management Plan
- (d) **Location**
Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Council's website.

Class 4

- (a) **Title**
Council Decisions
- (b) **Definition**
Agendas and minutes for all Executive, committee and Council meetings **EXCEPT** for items falling within Schedule 12A of Part I of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended from time to time.
- (c) **Explanation**
The reports to and subsequent decisions of the Executive, committees and the Council itself except for exempt information as defined above and explained in the introduction to this scheme.
- (d) **Location**
Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Council's website.

Class 5

- (a) **Title**
Council Performance.
- (b) **Definition**
Best Value Local Performance Plan 2002 and succeeding years.
- (c) **Explanation**
An annual document detailing the Council's performance in selected service areas, including comparative figures.
- (d) **Location**
Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Council's website.

Class 6

- (a) **Title**
Council Services.
- (b) **Definition**
An alphabetical A-Z list of Council Services.
- (c) **Explanation**
Detailed breakdown of services, with relevant officer contacts.
- (d) **Location**
Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, and the Council's website.