



Town Clerk: Caroline Leet

**EDENBRIDGE**  
**TOWN COUNCIL**

# **Freedom of Information and Publication Scheme Policy**

Adopted by full Council on 09 March 2026

This Policy forms part of the Council's wider information governance framework and should be read alongside the Privacy Notices, Data Protection Policy, Records Retention and Disposal Policy, and IT and Cyber Security policies.

## 1. Introduction

Edenbridge Town Council (“the Council”) is committed to openness, transparency, and accountability in the conduct of its business. This Policy sets out how the Council makes information available to the public under the **Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)** through its Publication Scheme and how requests for information are handled.

This Policy is based on the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) Model Publication Scheme for Local Authorities and has been adopted by the Council.

The Freedom of Information Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, including the Town Council. Further information on the Act is available from the Information Commissioner’s (ICO) website.

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## 2. Relationship with Other Information Rights

Requests for information may fall under different legislative frameworks. The Council will consider each request and respond under the most appropriate legislation, including:

- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR)
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018

Requests by individuals for their own personal data will be handled as Subject Access Requests (SARs) under UK GDPR and are not dealt with under this Policy.

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## 3. The Publication Scheme

The Publication Scheme commits the Council to proactively publishing information in accordance with the ICO’s model scheme. The scheme specifies:

- The classes of information the Council publishes or intends to publish
- How the information can be obtained
- Whether a charge applies

The Council will make information available unless:

- It is exempt from disclosure; or
- It is not held by the Council.

Information in draft form may be withheld where it is not intended for publication or remains subject to further development.

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## 4. Classes of Information

The Council publishes information within the following standard classes:

### **Class 1 – Who We Are and What We Do**

Information relating to the Council's constitution, membership, committees, and contact details.

### **Class 2 – What We Spend and How We Spend It**

Information on budgets, precepts, accounts, audit, expenses, and financial policies.

### **Class 3 – What Our Priorities Are and How We Are Doing**

Plans, strategies, performance information, and related reports.

### **Class 4 – How We Make Decisions**

Agendas, minutes, reports, consultation responses, and decision-making processes.

### **Class 5 – Our Policies and Procedures**

Council policies, procedures, and protocols.

### **Class 6 – Lists and Registers**

Registers required by law and other routinely maintained lists.

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## 5. Access to Information

Information published under the Scheme is normally available:

- On the Council's website
- By inspection at the Council offices (by appointment)
- In hard copy, where appropriate

Where information is available electronically, this will normally be the preferred method of access.

In exceptional circumstances, some information may be available only by inspection in person. Where this applies, contact details will be provided and an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will normally be provided in the language in which it is held, or in such other language as may be legally required. Where the Council is legally required to translate information, it will do so.

The Council will comply with its obligations under disability and discrimination legislation, and any other relevant legislation, when providing information in alternative forms or formats.

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## 6. Requests for Information

The Council will respond to written requests for information in accordance with FOIA or EIR, as appropriate, within **20 working days**, subject to any applicable exemptions or extensions permitted by law.

Where information is already available through the Publication Scheme, the Council may direct applicants to the relevant source.

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## 7. Exemptions and Refusals

Some information may be withheld where an exemption applies under FOIA or EIR. Where information is refused, the Council will:

- Explain the reason for refusal;
  - Cite the relevant exemption; and
  - Provide details of the applicant's right to request an internal review.
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## 8. Charges

Most information published through the Scheme is available free of charge. Where a charge applies, it will be calculated in accordance with the Council's Schedule of Charges and ICO guidance.

Charges may include:

- Photocopying
  - Printing
  - Postage
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## 9. Disclosure Log

As a matter of good practice, the Council maintains a disclosure log where appropriate, recording responses to information requests that may be of wider public interest.

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## 10. Complaints and Internal Review

Applicants who are dissatisfied with the handling of a request may request an internal review. Requests for review should be submitted in writing to the Town Clerk.

If an applicant remains dissatisfied following an internal review, they may complain to the **Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)**.

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## 11. Review of the Policy

This Policy will be reviewed periodically and updated where necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance, or Council practices.

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Appendix 1 – Publication Scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained
<b>Class1 - Who we are and what we do</b>	
(Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)  This will be current information only.  N.B. Councils should already be publishing as much information as possible about how they can be contacted.	(hard copy or website)
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Contact details for the Town Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Staffing structure	Website  Hard copy contact Clerk Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Election Results	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
<b>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</b>	
(Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)  Current and previous financial year as a minimum	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Annual return form and report by auditor	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Finalised budget	In Council Minutes  Hard copy contact RFO

Precept	Council Minutes (usually Jan) Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Borrowing Approval letter	No current loans
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Grants given and received	Website Grants Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Members' allowances and expenses	Travel expenses only, where applicable, in accordance with HMRC rates Hard Copy contact RFO Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Expenditure over £500 (published in accordance with transparency requirements)	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Income over £500 (published in accordance with transparency requirements)	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Quarterly Comparisons	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
<b>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing</b>	
(Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)  Current and previous year as a minimum	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Local Plans Neighbourhood Plan (where applicable)	SDC website

	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Annual Report to Parish/Town or Community Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Local Council Awards Scheme	Local Council Award Scheme Foundation Level 2017/2021
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
<b>Class 4 – How we make decisions</b>	
Decision making processes and records of decisions	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Timetable of meetings (Council and any committee/sub-committee meetings and Town meetings)	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Minutes of meetings (as above) – n.b. this will exclude information that is regarded as private to the meeting.	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Reports presented to council meetings – From May 2015 n.b. this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website Hard copy contact Clerk
Responses to consultation papers	Summary on website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Responses to planning applications	Website for Planning and Transportation Minutes or on Sevenoaks District Council website
Bye-laws	Website

	Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
<b>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</b>	
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities  Current information only	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedural standing orders</li> <li>• Financial Regulations</li> <li>• Committee and sub-committee terms of reference</li> <li>• Delegated authority in respect of officers</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Other policies</li> </ul>	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard terms and conditions of employment (where applicable)</li> <li>• Internal instructions to staff and policies relating to the delivery of services</li> <li>• Equality and diversity policy</li> <li>• Health and safety policy</li> <li>• Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)</li> <li>• Policies and procedures for handling requests for information</li> <li>• Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)</li> </ul>	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Information security policy	Standard terms and conditions of employment (where applicable)  and Data Protection Policy
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Data protection policies	Website  Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	As per legislation

<b>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</b>	
Currently maintained lists and registers (as applicable)	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk; 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)	N/A
Assets register	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by parish and town councils)	Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Register of members' interests	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Register of gifts and hospitality	Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
<b>Class 7 – The services we offer</b>	
(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)  Current information only	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk Some information may only be available by inspection.
Allotments	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Community centres and village halls	Website

	Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Hard copy Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Bus shelters	Hard copy Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Markets	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Public conveniences	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Agency agreements	Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Streetlights	Website Or contact Admin Officer
Recycling	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk
Visitor Information	Website Hard copy – contact the Town Clerk

## 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
<b>Disbursement cost</b>	Photocopying @ 7p per sheet (black & white)	Approved Fees and Charges
	Photocopying @ 14p per sheet (colour)	Approved Fees and Charges
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 <sup>nd</sup> class
<b>Statutory Fee</b>	Statutory fees will apply if complying with a request would cost more than £450 (18 hours at £25ph). The Town Council can refuse the request outright or do the work for an extra charge	<a href="#">Freedom Of Information Code of Practice 2018</a>
<b>Other</b>	Examples may include staff time (internal or external at £25ph); cost of materials or hire of specialist equipment (for example rental or licensing) for specific activity of redaction	Freedom of Information Act 2000