

NEATH TOWN COUNCIL
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT
MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Freedom of Information Act (“The Act”) gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by Public Authorities, subject to specified exemptions, and places a number of obligations on defined public authorities. Any person who makes a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and, subject to exemptions, supplied with that information.
- 1.2** Individuals already have the right of access to information about themselves under the Data Protection Act 1998. As far as public authorities are concerned, the Freedom of Information Act extends the right to allow public access to all types of information held.
- 1.3** Neath Town Council is a public authority for the purposes of the Act and is required to adopt, produce and publish a publication scheme setting out the classes of information it holds, the manner in which it intends to publish the information and whether a charge will be made for the information. The purpose of the Council’s scheme is to ensure that a significant amount of information is available, without the need for a specific request. It is the aim of the Council to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness.
- 1.4** The Model Publication Scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner (ICO). The ICO has changed the emphasis in the approval and operation of the publication scheme to a generic model which has to be adopted and operated by all public authorities from January 1st 2009 without modification.

2. SCOPE AND FORMAT OF INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED

- 2.1** The Information Commissioner has approved a model publication scheme for Town and Community Councils in England and Wales (known collectively as Local Councils) The Council’s publication scheme is based on the model scheme and contains core classes of information as well as optional information and classes.
- 2.2** Currently some of the information specified in the various classes is available for inspection in hard format only. As part of its IT development strategy the Council will be continually developing its website where much of the information could well be published as a matter of course. However, hard copies of information will continue to be made available if requested.

3. *EXCLUDED INFORMATION AND AGE LIMITATIONS*

3.1 The following information is excluded from the Council's Publication Scheme.

- a. personal information relating to Councillors (other than required to be declared in the Register of Interests)
- b. information relating to private individuals including Council employees' personal records by virtue of it being personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.
- c. general correspondence sent or received by the Council
- d. commercially sensitive information including quotations, tenders, loan documentation, insurance policies and leases/tenancy details.
- e. Unless otherwise specified in the scheme planning consultations, statutory plans and rights of way/footpath maps, all of which are available from NPTCBC local planning and/or highway authority respectively.
- f. with regard to leisure gardens (allotments) individual tenancy agreements and rent payment records under both privacy and data protection laws.

3.2 In certain classes there is a limitation on the age of some documentation which is automatically available as a matter of course within the scheme. Information beyond the specified age limitation may still be available automatically under the scheme or may need to be requested specifically. Where age limitations apply these are indicated in brackets.

4 *CHARGING POLICY*

- 4.1** Information (hard copy) can be inspected at the Council offices, by appointment, free of charge.
- 4.2** Information which can be photocopied without breaching copyright laws will be copied by the Town Council at a cost of 10p per A4 sheet.
- 4.3** Where the Council is required to undertake a detailed search of records which will take longer than 18 hours, (in line with the appropriate cost ceiling - section 12 of the FOIA), an estimate of costs will be determined and conveyed to the applicant, and therefore it will be appropriate to assist the applicant to narrow the scope of the request.
- 4.4** The cost of actual postage will be charged if applicable.

5 *SCHEME REVIEW*

5.1 This scheme will be reviewed no later than three years from the date of approval by the Information Commissioner.

6. GENERAL INFORMATION

Neath Town Council
10/12 Orchard Street
NEATH
SA11 1DU

01639 642126

Email address:- clerk@neathtowncouncil.gov.uk

Web site:- neathtowncouncil.gov.uk
Office opening hours:- 9.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Monday to Friday

Officer responsible for scheme:- Anne Ellis, Town Clerk
Officer responsible for scheme maintenance:- Anne Ellis, Town Clerk

<i>Class</i>	<i>Information to be published</i>	<i>Method of publication</i>
Class 1		
Who are we and what we do	Council Members	Web site or hard copy
	Council Committees	Web site or hard copy
	Details of main Council office and accessibility details	Web site or hard copy
Class 2		
What we spend and how we spend it.	Annual precept request and budget details (current and previous financial year)	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Payment to contractors and suppliers	Web site (as contained in minutes)
	Annual Accounts and supporting information/documentation including the Annual Return and report by the Internal and External Auditors (current and previous financial year)	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	VAT records – limited to the last financial year.	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Borrowing approval letter	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Grants given and received	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Members allowances and expenses	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Fees and charges	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment

Class 3		
What are our priorities and how we are doing it	Decision making process and records of decisions	Web site or hard copy minutes as produced.
	Local Charters	n/a
	Community Development Plan	Published with NPTCBC
Class 4		
How we make decisions	Agendas of Meetings	Hard copy displayed on notice board and web site
	Minutes of Meetings (excluding information that is properly regarded as confidential in the meeting)	Hard copy or web site. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Timetable of Meetings	Hard copy or web site
	Reports presented to council meetings (excluding information regarded as confidential in the meeting)	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Response to planning applications	Observations on planning applications are reproduced in full in the Minutes of Council. Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
Class 5		
Our Policies and Procedures	<i>Conduct of Council Business</i>	
	Procedural standing orders	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Committee and sub-committee terms of reference	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Code of Conduct	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Policy statements	Hard copies. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Policy for handling requests for information	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Complaints procedure	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Data protection policy	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.

	Schedule of hire charges	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	<i>Employment of Staff</i>	
	Health and Safety Policy	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Terms and Conditions of Service (excluding information of employees personal details)	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Job Descriptions (excluding information of employees personal details)	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Equal Opportunities Policy	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
	Staffing Structure	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment.
Class 6		
Lists & Registers	Asset Register	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Register of members interest	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
	Members Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Hard copy. Details can be inspected at the Council office by appointment
Class 7		
The services we offer		
	Allotments:- Site plan and standard tenancy agreements	Hard copy. Office
	Bus Shelters	Office
	Public Seating	Office
	Community Centres	Office
	Town Hall	Office
	Castle and castle gardens	Office
	Provision of meals for elderly, disabled and unemployed	Office