

Document 3.1

PUBLICATION SCHEME

(Required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000)

Adopted 27 March 2017
Review by March 2019

1. Publication Scheme

This publication scheme is based on a model scheme which has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner.

- 1.1 This publication scheme commits Hertford Town Council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the Council.
- 1.2 The scheme commits an authority to:
 - Publish proactively or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
 - Specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
 - Publish proactively or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
 - Produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
 - Review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
 - Produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
 - Make this publication scheme available to the public.

2. Classes of Information

- 2.1 Who we are and what we do.

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

- 2.2 What we spend and how we spend it.

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

2.3 What our priorities are and how we are doing.

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

2.4 How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

2.5 Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

2.6 Lists and Registers.

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

2.7 The Services we offer.

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

3. Information Hertford Town Council publishes under the scheme.

3.1 This information is attached as an appendix. In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

3.2 Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

- 3.3 Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme.
- 3.5 The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the Council for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum. Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge. Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament. Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

4. Written Requests

- 4.1 Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

Note of Archiving Documents

This note does not form part of the Publication Scheme and is drawn from the Society of Local Council Clerks' Advice Note 47/2006. It should be used as a guide to aid consistent archiving.

The time that a Council is required to keep documents will depend on what the legal status of the document and how much space is available. It is good practice to keep all papers in files or folders according to subject matter. Files that are current should be kept ready to hand. Older files can be archived. Those papers which are no longer of use, nor of any historical interest can be destroyed. Remember that confidential or personnel papers should be shredded before being disposed of.

Legal documents

Minute books and burial records need to be kept forever. These are legal documents and must not be destroyed. Your County Council should be able to archive them for you. They keep documents at the correct temperature and humidity so it is sensible to lodge any particularly old documents with them. It is a good idea to keep more recent Minute books to hand in case you need to refer to them. You may also need to refer back to old burial books on a regular basis.

Deeds, leases and other similar documents also need to be kept whilst the Council owns/occupies the property/land. It is best to keep these in a strong box at the bank with copies in the office.

It is also worth keeping correspondence relating to land/buildings the Council owns for as long it remains in your ownership so that you can refer to them when answer queries about boundary disputes, the provision of services etc..

Inland Revenue and VAT

Salaries, Inland Revenue and VAT papers should be kept for a minimum of 5 years. This assumes that the Council has had an external audit in each of the years and that the auditor did not raise any material concerns. A Council would normally expect to have a VAT inspection once every 10 years and it is probably sensible to keep VAT papers from one inspection to the next.

Planning Applications

There is no legal requirement for Parish Councils to keep copies of planning applications but for ease of reference clerks may like to keep planning applications for two or three years if they have space. It is sensible to keep copies of large or controversial applications for longer than that.

If the Council or the public need to refer to old applications they can be obtained from the Planning Authority.

Other material

It is a matter of judgement how long a clerk keeps other material. Some material may be of historical interest and it might be worth keeping a box with papers relating to things such as the Millennium Celebrations or a visit from a VIP. Your local library might be willing to store such material.

All other material should be reviewed ever couple of years and a decision made as to whether or not it is worth keeping. But remember that if there is a controversial issue that just keeps rumbling on you should keep hold of papers.

Storing documents

Archived material is only useful if you know what you have got so it should be boxed, labelled and stored away somewhere where it will not become a fire hazard. It is also sensible to keep a detailed record of what is in each box.

November 2006

Information available from Hertford Town Council under the model publication scheme

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

Finalised budget	Council's Constitution and Minutes - Hard copy or website	
Precept	Council's Constitution, Annual Report and Minutes - Hard copy or website	
Borrowing Approval letter	No current borrowings	
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Council's Constitution - Hard copy or website	
Grants given and received	Council Minutes – Hard copy and website	
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	In development – will be published by June 2017	
Members' allowances and expenses	Members do not receive allowances or expenses with the exception of the Mayor (Chair). This information is available in the financial reports specified above.	
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)		
Neighbourhood Plan for Sele Ward Neighbourhood Plan for Bengo Ward	Currently being developed	
Annual Report to Town Meeting (current and previous year as a minimum)	Annual Report – Hard copy and website	
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	NA	
Class 4 – How we make decisions (Decision making processes and records of decisions)		
Current and previous council year as a minimum		

Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and parish meetings)	Hard copy, website, Tourist Information Centre and Notice Boards	
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Hard copy, website, Tourist Information Centre and Notice Boards	
Minutes of meetings (as above) – nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Hard copy, website, Tourist Information Centre and Library	
Reports presented to council meetings - nb this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Hard copy, website, Tourist Information Centre	
Responses to consultation papers	Hard Copy	
Responses to planning applications	Hard Copy and website within the minutes of the Planning Sub Committee meetings.	
Bye-laws	NA	
Class 5 – Our policies and procedures (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities) Current information only		
Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business: Procedural standing orders Committee and sub-committee terms of reference Delegated authority in respect of officers Code of Conduct Policy statements	Council's Constitution - Hard copy or website	

<p>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</p> <p>Internal policies relating to the delivery of services</p> <p>Equality and diversity policy</p> <p>Health and safety policy</p> <p>Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)</p> <p>Policies and procedures for handling requests for information</p> <p>Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)</p>	Council's Constitution contains all listed policies- Hard copy or website	
Information security policy	In development by June 2017	
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	In development by June 2017	
Data protection policies	Council's Constitution - Hard copy or website	
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Council's Constitution - Hard copy or website	
<p>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</p> <p>Currently maintained lists and registers only</p>		
Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)	Hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection	
Assets Register	Hard copy or website; Some information may only be available by inspection.	
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by parish councils)	Hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection	

Register of members' interests	Hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection	
Register of gifts and hospitality	Information available by inspection	
Class 7 – The services we offer (Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses) Current information only		
Allotments	Allotment Tenancy agreements and rule and regulations - hard copy or website	
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	Schedule of fees, Transfer of Exclusive Rights leaflet, Burial Registers - hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection	
Community centres and village halls	Schedule of fees – hard copy or website	
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection	
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Council's Constitution Hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection	
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Council's Constitution – Hard copy or website Schedule of Fees and Charges – Hard copy and website	

<p>Additional Information This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above</p>		
<p>Events programme</p>	<p>Schedule of events, financial details and involvement in events – Council's Constitution and leaflets – hard copy or website</p>	

Contact details:

**The Town Clerk
Hertford Town Council
The Castle
Hertford
SG14 1HR**

* The actual cost incurred by the public authority - One copy of any document will be supplied free of charge to any Hertford resident, for collection from the Town Council Offices. For multiple copies, and/or for documents which are requested to be posted, the charge will be the copying cost at 5p per sheet black and white, and 20p per sheet colour, (based on actual cost) and the actual cost of Royal Mail 2nd class postage if applicable.