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# Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme

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**Westerham Town Council**

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REVIEWED ANNUALLY**

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# FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT PUBLICATION SCHEME

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## The Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act grants to members of the public rights of access to all kinds of recorded information held by a wide range of public authorities. Information about the Act is available from the Information Commissioner's Office at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## Publication Scheme

The Act requires every public authority to adopt and maintain a generic model publication scheme which should be adopted and operated by all public authorities from 1 January 2009. Westerham Town Council adopted the generic model publication scheme at their Council meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008. It is intended to provide everyone interested in the Council with a comprehensive guide to the information that the Council will automatically or routinely publish or otherwise makes available to the public.

## Freedom of Information Requests and the Publication Scheme

It is important to note that a publication scheme simply sets out the information that is routinely available. Information that is not listed in the Information Available Guide of this document can still be requested and it will be made available unless it can be legitimately withheld. This can be done by making a written request to the Clerk who will reply within 20 working days after receipt of the request.

## The Council's Commitment to the Act

The Council is committed to openness and accountability and already makes large amounts of information available to the public, through its website, via the telephone, by post or by personal visits to the Council Office where much of the information can be viewed free of charge.

Occasionally it may be necessary to book an appointment.

## **2. MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME**

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.

This publication scheme commits an authority 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 authority.

Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner.

The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish 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.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To 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.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

### Classes of Information

#### **Who we are and what we do.**

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

#### **What we spend and how we spend it.**

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

**What our priorities are and how we are doing.**

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

**How we make decisions.**

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

**Our policies and procedures.**

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

**Lists and Registers.**

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

**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.

**The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available**

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

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.

#### Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

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 authority 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
- they 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.

### Written Requests

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.

## Information available from Westerham Town Council under the model publication scheme

Information to be published	How the information can be obtained	Cost
<p><b>Class1 - Who we are and what we do</b></p> <p>Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts</p> <p>This will be current information only</p>	<p>Website or hard copy</p>	<p>free 10p per sheet</p>
<p>Who's who on the Council and its Committees</p>	<p>Website / hard copy</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Contact details for Town Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))</p>	<p>Website / hard copy</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Location of main Council office and accessibility details</p>	<p>Website/hard copy</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Staffing structure</p>	<p>Hard copy</p>	<p>10p per sheet</p>
<p><b>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</b></p> <p>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>	<p>Website/Hard copy</p>	<p>10p per sheet</p>

Annual return form and report by auditor	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Finalised budget	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Precept	Annual Report or hard copy	10p per sheet
Borrowing Approval letter	Hard Copy (If applicable)	10p per sheet
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	Website/Hard Copy	10p per sheet
Grants given and received	Annual Report/hard copy	Free and/or 10p per sheet
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Members' allowances and expenses	Hard copy	10p per sheet
<b>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing</b> Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Village Design Statement	Website/Hard copy	£2
Annual Report to Town	Website/hardcopy	Free
Local Council Award status	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Local charters drawn up in accordance with DCLG guidelines	Hard copy	10p per sheet
<b>Class 4 – How we make decisions</b> Decision making processes and records of decisions	Website/ hardcopy	Free 10p per sheet

Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/sub-committee meetings and town meetings)	Website/hard copy	As above
Agendas of meetings (as above)	Website/hardcopy	As above
Minutes of meetings (as above) – this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Website/hard copy	As above
Reports presented to council meetings - this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Responses to consultation papers	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Responses to planning applications	Website/hard copy	Free /10p per sheet
Bye-laws	Hard copy	10p per sheet
<b>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</b>		
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities (Current information only)	Website or Hard copy	Free 10p per sheet

Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:		
Procedural standing orders	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Committee and sub-committee terms of reference	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Delegated authority in respect of officers	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Code of Conduct	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Policy statements	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Complaints Procedure	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:		
Internal policies relating to the delivery of services	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Equality and diversity policy	n/a	
Health and safety policy	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)	Website/hard copy	Free/10p per sheet
Policies and procedures for handling requests for information	Website/hard copy	As Above
Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)		
Information security policy	n/a	
Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	n/a	10p per sheet

Data protection policies	n/a	10p per sheet
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	Website/hard copy	Free/10p per sheet
<b>Class 6 – Lists and Registers</b> Currently maintained lists and registers only	(hard copy or website; 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)	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Assets Register	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by parish/town councils)	n/a	10p per sheet
Register of members' interests	Inspection only/ SDC	
Register of gifts and hospitality	Inspection only /SDC	
<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)	hard copy or website; some information may only be available by inspection	
Allotments	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Burial grounds and closed churchyards	n/a	
Community centres and village halls	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities	Website/Hard copy	10p per sheet
Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting	Hard copy	10p per sheet

Bus shelters	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Markets	n/a	
Public conveniences	Hard copy	10p pr sheet
Agency agreements	n/a	10p per sheet
A summary of services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Hard copy	10p per sheet
Additional Information  This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above	Hard copy	10p per sheet

**Contact details:**

Website Address: [www.westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Requests for hard copies can be made to:-

The Clerk  
Westerham Town Council  
Russell House  
Market Square  
Westerham  
Kent. TN16 1RB

e-mail: [office@westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Tel: 01959 562147

<b>TYPE OF CHARGE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>BASIS OF CHARGE</b>
<b>Disbursement cost</b>	Photocopying @ 10p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Photocopying @20p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 <sup>nd</sup> class

\* the actual cost incurred by the public authority

## **5. COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

The Council would normally expect the Town Clerk to understand what information you have asked for and to be able to tell you where you can find it. If the information you receive is not what you asked for or need, you should first contact the Town Clerk. If the information you have asked for is not available, the Town Clerk will tell you why.

If you believe that the Council has not dealt with your request fairly and cannot deal with it satisfactorily on an informal basis, you should follow our complaints procedure. You can get details from - Westerham Town Council, Russell House, Market Square, Westerham, Kent. TN161RB  
 Telephone: 01959 562147 E mail: [office@westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)

If you have followed our complaints procedure and are still not happy with how we have dealt with your request, you may also contact the Information Commissioner to ask him/her to investigate the matter.

