

Publication Scheme 2009

- For the purposes of Section 19 of the
Freedom of Information Act 2000



Copeland Borough Council

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ON REQUEST

The Freedom of Information Act and Copeland Borough Council

The Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives citizens a 'general right of access' to all information held by public authorities. Individuals have the right to be informed of whether or not the authority holds the information requested, and to be supplied with that information (subject to exemptions).

The Act applies to a number of public authorities, including, but not restricted to: central government departments, local authorities (including county, district and parish/town Councils), NHS bodies, schools, colleges and universities, police forces and both houses of parliament. Copeland Borough Council is one of the public authorities listed in Part II of Schedule 1 to the Act.

What is a publication scheme?

This Publication Scheme is in essence a guide to the information that the Council routinely publishes. The term *publication* is not limited to information contained in a bound or printed form (e.g. brochure or a book). Many different forms of information (e.g. web based information) are just as much a part of the Publication Scheme as a mass produced leaflet.

The purpose of this Publication Scheme is to ensure that a significant amount of information is available without the need for a specific request. The Officer responsible for the Publication Scheme is Denise James. You can contact her on 01946 598528 or by email djames@copelandbc.gov.uk

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) issued a Model Scheme which from 1st January 2009 Copeland Borough Council is using it as a basis for the Council's Publication Scheme.

By using the Model Scheme Copeland Borough Council is committing to: -

- Proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine information (including environmental information which is held by it and contained within each class).
- Specify information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below
- Proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information inline with the statements contained within the 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 the scheme.
- Produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is proactively available.
- Make this publication scheme available to the public.

What are the classes of Information?

The Model Scheme classifies information at a high level into seven classes and broadly states the way public authorities can provide information and what they can charge for.

THE SEVEN CLASSES ARE

1 Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and Legal Governance

2 What we spend and how we spend it

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

3 What our priorities are and how we are doing

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

4 How we make decisions

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

5 Our policies and procedures

Written protocols for delivering our function and responsibilities.

6 Lists and registers

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

7 Services provided by the Council

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases.

Information not generally included in the scheme:

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

How can I access the information?

- The Council will indicate clearly what information is covered by the scheme and how it can be obtained.
- Wherever possible information will be made available on the website. Where this is not practicable or when an individual does not wish to access the information through the website, the Council will indicate how much information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.
- In some circumstances information may only be available by viewing in person. Where this is the case contact details will be given and an appointment arranged within a reasonable timescale.
- Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such a language that is legally required. Where the Council is legally obliged to translate any information, it will do so.
- Obligations under the disability and discrimination legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to.

Am I likely to be charged for information?

- Material which is published on the website will be provided free of charge
- Charges may be incurred for information as specified by Parliament.
- Charges may be made, normally 10p a page, for actual disbursements incurred such as:
 - Photocopying
 - Postage and Packaging
 - Printing
 - Costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

How do I access information not covered by this scheme?

The Council aims to include as much information as possible in this Publication Scheme. However, information not included may be requested under the Freedom of Information Act.

Requests must be in writing (letter, fax, email) and must include: -

- Name of Applicant
- Correspondence Address (postal, email)
- Nature of request

If the applicant is unable to put their request in writing, the necessary assistance will be provided.

Requests for information should be sent to: -

The Freedom of Information Officer
Copeland Borough Council
The Copeland Centre
Catherine Street
Whitehaven
CA28 7SJ
Telephone 01946 598528
Email foi@copelandbc.gov.uk

Maintaining the Publication Scheme

The Council will review the scheme in accordance with such guidance as is produced by the Information Commissioner, and in accordance with section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.