

## Guide to Horsham District Council's Publication Scheme

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Overview of the Council's structure.

Horsham District Council ('the Council') is the local authority exercising district council functions within the Horsham District. The district has a population of approximately 130,500. The Council has a gross budget of £67.9m. It employs 562 full and part time staff.

The Council delivers the full range of services typical to a district council. These include:

- Local planning
- Development control
- Waste collection and recycling
- Revenues collection
- Benefits administration
- Housing services
- Leisure
- Elections
- Community safety
- Environmental health
- Building control
- Licensing
- Transport and car parks
- Economic development

The Council comprises 44 elected members. In 2001 the Council adopted new a constitution based on the Leader and Cabinet model. There are currently eight cabinet portfolios.

For further information about how the Council makes decisions see the Council's Constitution at the Council's website: [www.horsham.gov.uk](http://www.horsham.gov.uk). Copies are also available at each of the Council offices together with the help point at Horsham library. The Constitution which is a statutory document is updated regularly and sets out how the Council operates how decisions are made and procedures to be followed.

The Council works closely with other local authorities which serve the district including West Sussex County Council and the 33 parish and three non statutory neighbourhood councils and a large number of external public agencies for example, Sussex Police, the NHS and the voluntary sector. This is achieved through formal relationships, contracts and understandings. Some of these links can be accessed through the Council's website.

### **1.2 The Freedom of Information Act 2000**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. It gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, including the Council. It sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations upon the Council.

The Act came into force in two stages:

From February 2003 the Council was required to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme setting out the classes of information that it publishes or intends to publish and whether the material is, or is intended to be, available to the public free of charge or on payment.

From January 2005, any person who makes a request to the Council for information must be informed whether the Council holds that information and, subject to exemptions, be supplied with that information.

### **1.3 Overview of rights of access generally available to the citizen**

Individuals already have the right of access to information about themselves under the Data Protection Act 1998. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 extends this right to allow public access to all types of information held. The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 give members of the public the right to request environmental information from public bodies. Environmental information includes information about air, water, soil, land, plants and animals, energy, noise, waste and emissions. It also includes information about decisions, policies or activities that could affect these aspects of the environment.

## **1.4 The Council's commitment to the Freedom of Information Act**

The Council already makes large amounts of information available to the public, through its website, its offices, parish council offices, leisure centres, information points, local newspapers and libraries in the District. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 was a welcome opportunity both to improve the ways in which the Council informs the public it serves and to improve the ways in which it manages the large amount of information it holds. Information is an important asset which the Council enjoys and Freedom of Information has enabled the Council to make it more widely available and managed more efficiently. The full implementation of the Act has helped make services more open and accessible to the public.

## **2. The Publication Scheme**

### **2.1 What is a Publication Scheme? What is its aim and purpose?**

The 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 Scheme has encouraged the publication of more information that the Council was required to publish in the past under previous legislation, and has helped to develop a greater culture of openness.

The officer responsible for the Publication Scheme is Sarah Gill. You can contact her on 014703 215470 or email her at [foi@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:foi@horsham.gov.uk).

### **2.2 Structure of the Scheme**

This Publication Scheme is built around making it easier for the person asking for information to get access to it. This scheme is divided into general classes that are easy to understand and allow the user quickly to find the requested information. The classes are designed to be general so you do not need to know how the Council's organisation is structured to find your way through the scheme.

The classes are then divided into sub-classes. The sub-classes are in turn divided into specific types information. The type of information defines in more detail what is available in the scheme e.g.

Class	Who we are and what we do
Sub-class	Council democratic structure

Type of information Council structure, Committees, Members list, Parish Council, Scrutiny and Overview, Standards Committee, the Horsham District Council Cabinet

## **2.3 Revising the Scheme**

The Council is required to revise the scheme regularly. It is the intention of the Council to review the scheme regularly and it is expected that new material of interest to citizens will be added following each review. The electronic version of the Publication Scheme which is available to view via the Council's website will be continually updated with new material added as it becomes available.

## **2.4 Formats available**

The Publication Scheme is available on the Council's website and hard copies will be deposited at all of its offices within the district. A copy will also be available at the information help point in Horsham library and in each of the parishes where the parish council has an office open to the public.

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

Where it is within the capability of the Council, information will be provided on its website [www.horsham.gov.uk](http://www.horsham.gov.uk). Where it is impracticable to make information available on the website, or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, the Council 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.

The Scheme and documents to which it relates are available in the first language of the district - namely English. If English is not your first language or you have difficulty with the language and/or require large print or otherwise particular assistance, you may contact Sarah Gill on 01403 215470 or email her at [foi@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:foi@horsham.gov.uk)

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.

## 2.5 Charges

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 the Council's website will be 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

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.

In broad terms the following conditions will apply:

Email	Free of charge unless otherwise specified
Inspection (i.e. view at Council offices (by appointment)	Free of charge
Leaflet/booklet	Free of charge
Paper (extracts of viewed documents)	Photocopying charges
Publications produced by the District Council for sale	As per cover price
Website	Free of charge unless otherwise specified

If you need a lot of printed material the Council may charge you. Any charges made will be calculated at rates determined by the Council.

Current charges for supplying copies of documents held by Horsham District Council:

10 pence per sheet of A3 or A4 black and white or colour photocopied information.

There is no intention to charge for material that has previously been made available free of charge.

## **2.6 Written requests**

Information held by the Council 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. Further information is available on the Council's website in the Council's Guide to Freedom of Information.

## **2.7 Feedback**

The Council welcomes comments and suggestions on how it can improve the scheme as it is important that the scheme meets your needs.

Your comments on the following questions would help the Council to develop the scheme and make the Council more open in how it works.

- Have you understood the aim of the Publication Scheme?
- Are there any other areas of our work that you would like us to include in the Scheme?
- Did the structure of the scheme allow you to find the information you needed easily?
- Did you receive enough help from our staff when you asked for information?
- How could we improve the Publication Scheme?

To make comments or for advice and assistance concerning the scheme, or if you wish to make a request for information you can contact:

Sarah Gill  
Complaints and Information Officer  
Horsham District Council  
Park North  
North Street  
Horsham RH12 1RL  
Telephone: 01403 215470  
Email: [foi@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:foi@horsham.gov.uk)

The information can be found on the Council's website at:  
[www.horshamfoi.org.uk/search.asp](http://www.horshamfoi.org.uk/search.asp)

## 2.8 Complaints

The Council is determined to make sure that the services it provides are as efficient and effective as possible, and this includes requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The officer responsible for the Publication Scheme is Sarah Gill, who should be in a position to understand what information you have asked for and to tell you where to find it. If the information you receive is not what you need you should first contact Sarah Gill, if the information you have requested is not available she will tell you why.

If you believe that your request has not been dealt with fairly and cannot be dealt with satisfactorily on an informal basis you should follow the Council's complaints procedure. Details as to the Council's complaints procedure can be obtained from:

Sarah Gill  
Complaints and Information Officer  
Horsham District Council  
Park North  
North Street  
Email: [yoursay@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:yoursay@horsham.gov.uk)  
Horsham RH12 1RL  
Telephone: 01403 215470

Following a refusal to provide information an internal review of any decision not to provide the information will be carried out upon request and the requestor will be advised of the outcome of the review within 20 working days.

If following an internal review of the decision you are still not happy with how your request has been dealt with you may also contact:

The Information Commissioner  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 08456 30 60 60  
Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

## 2.9 Third Party Information

Some information provided by the Council and included within classes in the Publication Scheme may not have originated from within Horsham District Council (e.g. appeal guidance produced by the planning inspectorate). Every attempt has been made to ensure that the current version of such information is available. If in doubt, please contact the originator of the document in question. Where possible, direct links have been provided in the documentation to any relevant third party websites.

## **2.10 Copyright and re use of information**

Horsham District Council claims copyright in all documents which it produces. The supply of these documents under Freedom of Information does not therefore give the person or organisation who receives them an automatic right to reuse the documents in any way which would infringe copyright, for example, by making multiple copies, publishing and issuing copies to the public.

Brief extracts of any material included in this Publication Scheme may be reproduced under the fair dealing provisions of the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 (sections 28 and 29) for the purposes of research, private study, reviews and news reporting.

Where the document is a third party document reference should be made direct to the third party to ascertain any copyright restrictions.

For further information on reusing information please see the Council's webpage:

[www.horsham.gov.uk/your\\_council/FoI/your\\_council\\_9440.asp](http://www.horsham.gov.uk/your_council/FoI/your_council_9440.asp)

or contact Sarah Gill on 01403 215470 or email to [foi@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:foi@horsham.gov.uk)

## **3. Classes of information contained in the Scheme and how those have been arrived at.**

3.1 This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner and may be adopted by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice. Horsham District Council adopted this Publication Scheme to take effect from 1 January 2009.

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.

The Scheme is currently divided into seven general classes:

- Who we are and what we do
- What we spend and how we spend it
- What our priorities are and how we are doing
- How we make decisions
- Our policies and procedures
- Lists and registers

These classes are then divided into sub classes where appropriate. The sub classes are then divided into specific types of information. At the time of printing this guide there are currently 165 specific types of information which define what is available within the scheme.

Please note that the electronic version of the scheme which is available on the Council's website will be continually updated with new material added as it becomes available.

### **3.2 Classes of information to be published at a later date**

Certain classes of information have been identified for publication at a later date and appear as an empty sub – class within the current scheme. Where possible an indication of the publication date has been included in the Scheme details.

### **3.3 Classes that contain information subject to exemptions**

Although the Act gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by the Council there are also some exemptions. Where particular information comes within an exempt class under the Act or other legislation this will be made clear within the class description. Where only part of the information comes within an exempt class it will be published with the exempt material deleted. In general the following information will be exempt from disclosure:

- Where the information is already available, e.g. at a Council office
- Information covering the conduct of criminal investigations and proceedings
- Law enforcement, particularly concerning council tax and national non domestic rate collection
- Where the disclosure of information would endanger the health and safety of individuals
- Environmental information which can be accessed by an individual under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- Where the information can be accessed by an individual under the Data Protection Act 1998
- Where the disclosure of the information would breach a confidence actionable in the courts
- Where the disclosure of the information would breach legal professional privilege
- Where the information is a trade secret

#### 4. Schedule of classes of information

##### Class 1 - Who we are and what we do

This class contains organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance information.

<b>Sub Class</b>	<b>Type of information to be found in this sub class</b>
Council Constitution	Constitution, Member's Code of Conduct and Summary, Local Assessment of complaints against Councillors
Council Democratic Structure	Council Structure, Committees, Members List, Parish Council, Scrutiny and Overview, Standards Committee, the Horsham District Council Cabinet
Council Directorate Structure	Corporate Management Structure
Location and opening times of Council properties	Help Points, Location and opening times of council properties
Currently elected Councillor's information and contact details	Names and contact details of Councillors by ward/committee/ membership/individuals, political composition of the Council, Members' Bulletin
Contact details for all customer facing departments	Contact details for council departments
Most recent election results	European Parliament, United Kingdom Parliament, West Sussex County Council Horsham District Council, Parish and Neighbourhood Councils
Relationships with other authorities	The role of the Monitoring Officer, Waste Management, Roads and Transport, Registered Social Landlords, Sussex Building Control, Horsham District Community Partnership.

## Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it

**This class contains financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.**

<b>Sub Class</b>	<b>Type of information to be found in this sub class</b>
Financial statements, budgets and variance reports	Budget book, Statement of Accounts
Capital Programme	Budget Book
Spending reviews	Budget Monitoring Reports to Cabinet quarterly
Financial audit reports	Annual audit and inspection letter
The Members allowances scheme and allowances paid under to Councillors each year	Members' Allowances
Staff allowances and expenses	Mileage, accommodation and subsistence rates that can be claimed by staff
Pay and grading structure	Staff pay scales
Procurement procedures	Procurement strategy
Details of contracts currently being tendered	Invites to tender are placed on the Council's website or produced on request
Lists of contracts awarded and their value	Horsham District Council contracts register
District auditor's report	Annual Audit Inspection Letter, Annual Governance report

Financial statements for projects and events	Reports to Council
Internal financial regulations	The Council's Constitution
Funding for partnership arrangements	Annual Budget Report

### Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing

This class contains information about strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.

<b>Sub Class</b>	<b>Type of information to be found in this sub class</b>
Annual reports	Annual report, financial information
Strategies and business plans for services provided by the Council	The Corporate Plan, departmental service plans
Best value performance plan	Best value performance plans, best value reviews
Internal and external performance reviews	Comprehensive performance assessments
Economic development action plan	Corporate Plan
Forward plan	Forward plan, Budget Book
Capital Strategy	Budget Report to Council
Best value performance indicators	Best value performance indicators 2007/8
District auditors reports on the best value performance plan and performance indicators	The Audit Commission report summary, set of indicators
Comprehensive performance assessment	Comprehensive performance assessment papers
Inspection Reports	

Statistical information produced in accordance with the Council's and departmental requirements	Visitor statistics
Impact Assessments	Copies of impact assessments where available
Service Standards	Leisure service standards, Customer Service Charter

#### **Class 4 – How we make decisions**

**This class contains information about our decision making processes and records of decisions.**

<b>Sub Class</b>	<b>Type of information to be found in this sub class</b>
Timetable of Council meetings	Year Book, Council meeting dates
Agendas, officers' reports, background papers and minutes of Council committee, sub committee meetings and working groups	Agendas and minutes, forward plans, Your right to speak
Major policy proposals and decisions	Facts and analyses of facts considered when framing major policies
Public consultations	Details of current public consultations
Internal communications guidance, criteria used for decision making, internal instructions, manuals etc	Delegated authority

## Class 5 – Our policies and procedures

This class contains information about our current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

Sub Class	Type of information to be found in this sub class
Strategies developed in partnership with other authorities	
Policies and procedures for conducting Council business	Corporate legislation, equality
Policies and procedures for delivering Council services	Council emergency plans, codes of practice on the use of CCTV
Policies and procedures about the recruitment and employment of staff	Policies and guidance, staffing numbers, vacancies
Customer Services	Complaints, Comments and suggestions, annual letter from the Local Government Ombudsman, annual statistics – complaints and investigations, Local Government Ombudsman reports, Standards Committee local determination reports
Records Management and personal data policies	Freedom of Information, data protection, The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
Charging regimes and policies	
Strategy documents and policies	Strategy documents, Byelaws

## Class 6 – Lists and Registers

This class contains information held in lists and registers required by law and other lists and registers which are maintained by the Council.

Sub Class	Type of information to be found in this sub class
Election expenses	Returns/declarations and accompanying documents relating election expenses sent by a candidate of election to the Council
Asset registers and information asset register	Asset Management Plan
Disclosure Log	Freedom of information request disclosure log
Register of Councillors' financial interests and gifts and/or hospitality	Register of Members' interests
Highways, licensing, planning, commons, footpaths etc.	Local land charges register, planning applications register, register of prior notifications, public sewer map, register of Section 106 agreements,
Electoral register	Electoral register (available to view by appointment only – no copies may be taken)

## Class 7 – Services provided by the Council

This class contains information about the services the Council provides including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

Sub Class	Type of information to be found in this sub class
Services for local businesses	Business Directory, vacant property register, shoppers guide
Regulatory and licensing responsibilities	
Services for other organisations	
Services for which the Council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	Building Control services and charges, local land charge searches, business waste, cesspits and septic tanks, food hygiene courses, pest control services
Information for visitors to the area, leisure information, events, museums, libraries	Arts and entertainment, Parks and countryside, sport and recreation, tourism, leisure
Leaflets, booklets and newsletters	Community safety newsletter, Youth news, news, official handbook
Media releases	News releases
Election Information	Polling stations, election results, the voting process
Planning information and guidance	Drainage, advertisements, compulsory purchase orders, enforcement, gardens, hedges, lawful development certificates, listed buildings and conservation areas, miscellaneous planning advice, nature conservation, planning appeals, planning constraints, supplementary planning guidance, telecommunications, forms and leaflets, household extensions
Strategic planning and local development framework	Grasslands, housing development design, local plans, planning briefs, planning strategy, villages, local development framework

Public Health and licensing information, advice and guidance	Air quality, contaminated land, food safety and hygiene, neighbours, noise, pest control, pollution, radiation, water, health information, hazardous substances, dogs
Council tax information, advice and guidance	General information, council tax benefit, council tax and business rates
Housing information, advice and guidance	Housing benefit, homelessness, housing grants, housing standards, registered social landlords (RSLs), homebuy, retirement housing, allocations, options and advice, general information, temporary accommodation
Sustainability and energy	Energy, sustainability
Waste management and cleansing	Bin collections, litter, nappies, recycling, street cleaning, waste, licences
Grants and lottery funding advice	Advice on funding for community groups
Burial services and cemeteries	Details of Hills Cemetery, Roffey Cemetery and Denne Road Cemetery, information about planning a funeral
Public transport , concessionary fares and parking	Parking enforcement, parking payments, public transport, park and ride, shop mobility, street closures

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