

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Publication scheme

South Gloucestershire Council

What is the Scheme?

The council's guiding principles outline the way in which the council should operate. We are committed within these overarching principles to provide clear information about what we do and how we do it. We therefore welcome the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and its purpose to promote greater openness by public authorities. The Act requires us to have a publication scheme in place that is approved by the Information Commissioner. We have adopted the model publication scheme as prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. (full details are set out in the Appendix)

The scheme is a guide to the information routinely published by the council. It is not a list of actual publications (this will change as other things are published) but rather it is a description of the classes or types of information published.

The scheme commits us:

- 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
- To publish any dataset held by the authority that has been requested, and any updated versions it holds, unless the authority is satisfied that it is not appropriate to do so; to publish the dataset, where reasonably practicable, in an electronic form that is capable of re-use; and, if any information in the dataset is a relevant copyright work and the public authority is the only owner, to make the information available for re-use under a specified licence. The term 'dataset' is defined in section 11(5) of the Freedom of Information Act. The terms 'relevant copyright work' and 'specified licence' are defined in section 19(8) of that Act

Classes of information

The publication scheme specifies seven classes of information, under which most information we hold falls into. These are:

1. Who we are and what we do
2. What we spend and how we spend it
3. What our priorities are and how we are doing
4. How we make decisions
5. Our policies and procedures
6. Lists and registers
7. Services provided by the council

How are they published?

With few exceptions our publications can be downloaded from our website, www.southglos.gov.uk. They are also available in hard copy form from our offices. The exceptions are noted in the descriptions of the different classes of information in the appendix.

The Freedom of Information Officer is responsible for maintaining the scheme on a day to day basis and if you have difficulty in finding what you are looking they may be contacted at: The Civic Centre, PO Box 300, High Street, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 0DS
Telephone Number: 01454 868009. Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. Email: freedomofinformation@southglos.gov.uk

How much do publications cost?

All those on our website may be freely downloaded unless otherwise indicated. Most printed publications are available free of charge, but a charge may be made at rates decided from time to time for others.

Information that we will not publish under the scheme

A great deal of information that is held by the council is personal and private to individuals. This includes our employees and former employees and we will not publish it. Individuals have rights under the Data Protection Act to seek information relating to their own circumstances. A separate application will need to be made to the council under the provisions of this legislation.

Information which is exempt from disclosure or inspection under other legislation or would infringe someone else's rights may not be published. Wherever possible we have drawn attention to those classes which may contain information which cannot be published. The Freedom of Information Act and publication scheme does not limit other rights that people have to information.

Where can I find the publication scheme?

This publication scheme will be available on our website at www.southglos.gov.uk/publicationscheme and in our offices. The scheme and all published documents are available in the first language of the district -namely English. The Scheme is also available on request in large print or on audio-tape. If your first language is not English the council can arrange for interpreters to provide the information in a range of languages. Please phone 01454 868009 if you would like further information.

Individual requests for information

Following the Freedom of Information Act 2000 coming fully into force in January 2005 you are now able to make an individual request in writing for any information which has not already been published. Subject to certain exceptions we will have to tell you whether we have that information and then supply it to you. There may be a separate charge for providing this.

This part of the Act is fully retrospective which means that you may be able to obtain information from all of the council's records in existence. As with the publication scheme there will be some types of information that cannot be disclosed. Written requests for information can be sent by post to any council office or emailed to freedomofinformation@southglos.gov.uk

Feedback

This scheme is published in accordance with the statutory requirement to do so but more particularly because the council is committed to providing clearer information and acting in a transparent and open way. It is very important that the scheme is useable and meets your needs. We would therefore welcome suggestions for additional classes of information that could be included, or how our publications themselves might be improved.

The Head of Legal Governance and Democratic Services is the Senior Officer with overall responsibility for this scheme on behalf of the council so please address your written views to: The Civic Centre, PO Box 300, High Street, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 0DS.

Appendix

1. Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts.

Council constitution

Council democratic structure

Council directorate structure

Location and opening times of council properties

Currently elected councillors' information and contact details

Contact details for all customer-facing departments

Most recent election results

Relationships with other authorities

2. What we spend and how we spend it

Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit.

Financial statements, budgets and variance reports

Capital programme

Spending reviews

Financial audit reports

The members' allowances scheme and the allowances paid under it to councillors each year

Staff allowances and expenses

Pay and grading structure

Election expenses

Procurement procedures

Details of contracts currently being tendered

List of contracts awarded and their value

Details of grants to the voluntary community and social enterprise sector

District auditor's report

Financial statements for projects and events

Internal financial regulations

Funding for partnership arrangements

3. What our priorities are and how we are doing

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews.

Annual reports

Strategies and business plans for services provided by the council

Annual Report on Council Performance

Internal and external organisation performance reviews including external audits

Strategies developed in partnership with other authorities

Economic development action plan

Forward plan

Capital strategy

Statutory Performance Indicators

District auditor's reports

Comprehensive performance assessment

Inspection reports (e.g. OFSTED/Audit Commission)
Local Area Agreements
Statistical information produced in accordance with the council's and departmental requirements
Impact assessments
Privacy assessments
Service standards
Fileplans (high level for current records management systems)
Public service agreements

4. How we make decisions

Decision-making processes and records of decisions.
Timetable of council meetings (NB: this class does not include items falling within Schedule 12a Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1982 as from time to time amended. Some information in this class may be subject to an exemption under Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000)
Agendas, officers' reports, background papers and minutes of council committee, sub committee and standing forum meetings
Major policy proposals and decisions
Facts and analyses of facts considered when framing major policies
Public consultations (e.g. our online consultation system, iNovem)
Internal communications guidance, criteria used for decision-making, internal instructions, manuals and guidelines

5. Our policies and procedures

Policies and procedures for conducting council business
Policies and procedures for delivering our services
Pay policy statement
Policies and procedures about the recruitment and employment of staff
Customer service
Records management and personal data policies
Charging regimes and policies

6. Lists and registers

Public registers and registers held as public records
Asset registers and information asset register
CCTV
Disclosure logs
Register of councillors' financial and other interests
Senior officers' declaration of interests
Register of gifts and hospitality
Highways, licensing, planning, commons, footpaths etc
Register of electors

7. Services provided by the council

Information about the services the council provides including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

Regulatory and licensing responsibilities
Services for local businesses
Services for other organisations
Services for members of the public
Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees
Information for visitors to the area, leisure information, events, museums, libraries and archive collections
Leaflets, booklets and newsletters
Advice and guidance
Media releases
Election information

This document was last updated 4 March 2014.