



St. Helens
Council

Publication Scheme

Version: 1.0

Date: December 2019

Version Control

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires each public authority to produce a Publication Scheme. The purpose of the Freedom of Information Act is to promote greater openness by public authorities.
- 1.2 The Publication Scheme must set out the public authority's commitment to make certain classes of information routinely available, such as policies and procedures, minutes of meetings, annual reports and financial information.
- 1.3 In January 2009, the Information Commissioner's Office approved a model Publication Scheme for public authorities.

2 St Helens Council's Publication Scheme

- 2.1 The Publication Scheme (the Scheme) is a guide to information automatically or routinely published by the Council. It is not a list of the actual publications as these change frequently, but it contains a description of the types or 'classes' of information published.
- 2.2 Published information does not only refer to printed material, it also includes publication on the Council's website, one-off printed documents, reports and leaflets and some audio or video materials.
- 2.3 The Scheme lists information under seven broad classes.

3 What is Included

- 3.1 The information available has been grouped into the following classes:
 - Class 1 - Who We Are and What We Do
Organisational information, location and opening times of key council properties, elected councillors' information and contact details, constitutional and legal governance processes.
 - Class 2 - What We Spend and How We Spend It
Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure including allowances, pay and grading structures, tendering, procurement and contracts.
 - Class 3 - What Our Priorities Are and How We Are Doing
Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.
 - Class 4 - How We Make Decisions
Policy proposals and decisions, decision making processes including council meetings, agendas and reports, internal criteria and procedures, and consultations.
 - Class 5 - Our Policies and Procedures
Current written protocols for delivering the Council's functions and responsibilities.
 - Class 6 - Lists and Registers
Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the Council.
 - Class 7 - The Services We Offer
Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases, and a description of the services offered.
- 3.2 In preparing the Scheme the Council has taken account of the sort of information people normally ask for and what people are interested in.

- 3.3 Regard has also been given for the overall public interest of disclosure of information in the interests of open and accountable local government.

4 What is not Included

- 4.1 The seven 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.
- 4.2 A large amount of the information held by the Council is personal and private to individuals and will not be published. Individuals who wish to access their own information can do so by making a separate application under the Data Protection Act.
- 4.3 Some information may be exempt from disclosure or inspection under separate legislation, and where this may apply such information is excluded from publication.
- 4.4 The Scheme does not limit in any way other rights that people have to information nor does it limit in any way the very large amount of information that is otherwise published outside the Scheme. For example, planning applications will continue to be available for inspection. The Council will also continue to publish material on a routine basis, in the form of guidance or assistance about various Council services. For example, information leaflets about changes to bin collections during public holiday periods.

5 Obtaining Information Included in the Scheme

- 5.1 Most of the information covered by the Scheme is available on the Council's [website](#) and can be downloaded free of charge. There is a search facility to assist with finding information on the Council's website.
- 5.2 The Scheme's [web page](#) provides links to the information available in each Class.
- 5.3 In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.
- 5.4 Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where the Council is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.
- 5.5 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 the Scheme.

6 Charging Policy

- 6.1 The purpose of the Scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public.
- 6.2 All of the information available on the Council's website can be downloaded free of charge.
- 6.3 Most printed information and leaflets are also available free of charge.
- 6.4 Charges made by the Council for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

- 6.5 Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.
- 6.6 In line with guidance published by the Information Commissioner's Office, the Council may make a charge for actual disbursements incurred, such as to cover the costs:
- of postage and packaging (in line with the relevant postal charges);
 - for printing and copying (which will reflect photocopying charges levied by the Council's public libraries); or
 - directly incurred as a result of viewing information.
- 6.7 Charges may also be made for information provided under the Scheme where they are:
- legally authorised;
 - in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified; and
 - in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.
- 6.8 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.

7 Feedback and Review

- 7.1 The Senior Information Management Officer is responsible for the day-to-day maintenance and review of the Scheme.
- 7.2 It is important that the Scheme meets the needs of its users and it is the Council's intention to review the Scheme annually in accordance with such guidance as is produced by the Information Commissioner.
- 7.3 If you have any questions or comments about the Scheme, or if you require any further information please contact:
- Email: dataprotection@sthelens.gov.uk
Telephone: 01744 673474
Post: Internal Audit, St Helens Town Hall, Victoria Square, St Helens, WA10 1HB

8 Complaints

- 8.1 If you wish to submit a complaint relating to the Scheme, or the Council's response to a request for information, in the first instance please submit a request for an internal review via the Contact Centre:
- Email: contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk
Telephone: 01744 676789
Post: Wesley House, Corporation Street, St Helens, WA10 1HF
- 8.2 If, after going through the Council's internal review process you remain dissatisfied, you have the right of further appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office:
- Website: <https://ico.org.uk/>
Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Fax: 01625 524 510
Post: Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF