



**WEST BERKSHIRE  
COUNCIL**

**PUBLICATION SCHEME**

**SECTION 19  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

Revised May 2005

# West Berkshire Council Publication Scheme

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 What is a "Publication Scheme"?**

The Freedom of Information Act was introduced by Government in 2000 and requires all public authorities, of which West Berkshire is one, to produce what is known under the Act as a "Publication Scheme". West Berkshire Council submitted its scheme to the Information Commissioner, who is responsible for regulating public authorities, by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2002, and it was approved on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2003. This revision reflects the Council's intention to maintain the scheme in an up to date, useable and 'live' form.

The Publication Scheme is a guide to what types of information (not necessarily documents) are routinely published or made available electronically by West Berkshire Council. It lists groups of information known as "classes". Each "class" includes a description of what it contains, and examples of the types of documents included, details of the format in which this is made available (generally electronic and hard copy) and guidance on whether a fee or charge may apply.

In summary, the West Berkshire Council Publication Scheme will cover:

- Information we have a legal duty to publish (such as details of our services, contacts, committee minutes and agendas, budgets)
- Information we already publish ( such as Policies, Reports, Consultations)
- Information in relation to external bodies with which we have a partnership or which are stakeholders (information which we "hold" but have not necessarily produced, such as Parish Plans)
- Information which we will disclose on request under current access to information regimes (unpublished information may include statistical information, details of contractors, expenses)

West Berkshire Council is committed to making information which it routinely publishes available to the people of West Berkshire. The Publication Scheme will enable local people, voluntary bodies and other organisations to access more easily the documentation and information which the Council produces, and the services which the Council provides. The Council through its Members and Officers will also be seeking comments on this scheme and in particular how it can be improved in order to provide you with the information you need to know and the best way in which that information can be distributed.

## **1.2 How do I get the information described in the Publication Scheme?**

In some cases the information is contained within documents – it is the intention of the Council that all such information which is made readily available in a published format should be both available in hard copy (sometimes at a cost) and also electronically on the West Berkshire website. Other information may include applications forms, contact details, information about service accessibility, and information on service provision. This may not be so readily available in published documents although the Council would expect to have a series of leaflets to explain how different services would be accessed. In many cases the simplest method of access to this information will be through the website. However, written applications for documents or for information which cannot be found on the website should be made to the Council. Further details are given within this document.

### **1.3 The Information Commissioner**

The Information Commissioner is an independent monitor who will review and approve the scheme on behalf of the Government. The Publication Scheme is a legal requirement of the Freedom of Information Act and further information can be obtained from the Information Commissioners Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF by telephone 01625 545700 or from the website: [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk)

### **1.4 Feedback & monitoring performance**

The purpose of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and of the Publication Scheme is to promote greater openness by central and local government and other public sector organisations. The Publication Scheme is only approved by the Information Commissioner for a limited time and following 1<sup>st</sup> January, when the Freedom of Information Act came into force, the Council has revised the Scheme in line with the requirements of the Act.

Approval of the Council's original Publication Scheme was given on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2003. The approval lasts from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2003 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007. The Information Commissioner will remind the Council to submit a revised application before this publication scheme expires.

In order to ensure that the revision of the Publication Scheme meets the needs of West Berkshire's population, we would welcome any suggestions for additional types of information which you feel would be of assistance, (subject to the Council having the authority to publish such information) how easy you find the Publication Scheme to use and any other improvements which you feel would benefit our commitment to openness in local government.

The final section of the Publication Scheme gives details of areas where we would value your views.

## **2. INFORMATION WE CANNOT PUBLISH**

As with most legislation, the Freedom of Information Act refers to categories of information, known as **exempt information**, which the Council may hold but which is not suitable for publication.

There are 23 categories, in two groups, of **exempt information** which apply to all public bodies as defined in the Freedom of Information Act. Fortunately only some of these exemptions are likely to be relevant to information held by West Berkshire Council. The two groups of exemptions are known as "absolute exemptions" and "non-absolute exemptions".

### **2.1 Absolute exemptions**

Information falling within this category will not be made public, nor will the Council confirm or deny that it holds such information. There are eight absolute exemptions set out below as they appear in the Freedom of Information Act (the numbers being the Section reference within the 2000 Act).

- 21**    **Reasonably accessible by other means:** applies to information that is already in the Public domain
- 23**    **Security Matters:** issues affecting National Security
- 32**    **Court Records:** documents that are being used as part of court proceedings
- 34**    **Parliamentary Privilege:** release of information would infringe upon parliamentary privilege.
- 36**    **Effective conduct of public affairs:** release of information would prevent 'free and frank' provision of advice or exchange of views in discussions
- 40**    **Personal Information:** if information is personal information about the person making a request, then the enquiry must be dealt with under the Data Protection Act 1998.
- 41**    **Information provided in confidence:** if information has been provided to the Council by another Authority or body in confidence then the information is exempt.
- 44**    **Prohibition on disclosure:** we cannot disclose information if we have been prohibited from doing so by any other Act, Court decision etc.

### **2.2 Non-absolute exemptions**

There are seventeen non-absolute exemptions within the Act and if the Council considers that particular information comes under this category it becomes subject to the "public interest test". The basis of the public interest test is whether the benefit to the public of disclosing the information outweighs the concerns for confidentiality.

The following exemptions are within this category:

- 22**    **Information intended for future publication:** if a request is made for information that is to be made Public in due course then that information will be exempt. However, a Public Interest Test may conclude that there is no reason for delaying publication.
- 24**    **National security:** issues affecting National Security, which are not 'Absolutely' exempt.

- 26 **Defence:** if disclosure threatens the defence of the UK then it will be exempt.
- 27 **International relations:** information will be exempt if its disclosure would harm UK interests abroad.
- 28 **Relations within the UK:** if relations between Authorities and Administrations within the UK would be harmed by disclosure then an exemption will apply.
- 29 **The Economy:** this exemption protects the economic interests of the Authority, the region or the UK as a whole.
- 30 **Investigations and proceedings conducted by Public Authorities:** if information relates to criminal proceedings instigated by or involving the Council it will be exempt, subject to a Public Interest Test.
- 31 **Law Enforcement:** this protects procedures for preventing and detecting crime.
- 33 **Audit functions:** this applies to information held where the Council has acted as an Auditor for another Public Authority.
- 35 **Formulation of Government policy:** this protects information that is used in formulating policy.
- 37 **Communication with Her Majesty:** any communication with the Royal family will be exempt. This may occur during correspondence about Honours awards etc.
- 38 **Health & Safety:** If information was to be released that would harm the mental or physical health of an individual or threatens their safety, then it would be exempt.
- 39 **Environmental Information:** environmental information is released under a different set of regulations, with different charges and timescales. See 6.3
- 40 **Personal information:** similar to Section 40 (above), but this applies to what is called 'third party' information and a PI Test can apply.
- 42 **Legal Professional Privilege:** this protects existing rights to the exchange of information under Legal Professional Privilege.
- 43 **Commercial interests:** if Commercial Interests would be harmed or the information is a Trade Secret then the information will be exempt.

In all cases where an exemption may apply, senior staff will make the decision whether information is exempt, and if so, whether the public interest test applies, and whether information should be made available despite the exemption. We will inform you if an exemption applies, what the exemption is, and how the public interest test has been applied.

If you want further information about the exemptions, please contact the Information Commissioner or alternatively it can be found in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **3. OBTAINING COPIES OF PUBLICATIONS**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The classes of documents which are available are set out in the Publication Scheme itself later in this document. Access to the documents will be in hard copy format by making a request to the relevant service unit or to the Information Officer I&C, or in electronic format via the website.

If you need to obtain a copy of a publication, a large number of the Council's Offices provide direct access to hard copy versions of the documents listed as do some libraries. Otherwise, you should request the document via the relevant service unit, or via the Information Officer Information & Communication. The Council can provide documents in a variety of formats, and may direct you to electronic copies accessible via the website. If there is an additional charge you will be asked to pay prior to receiving the information. If you require any publication in a special format, such as braille or tape, or an alternative language format, there may be some delay, but it is our intention that the information requested should be with you within 14 days of a request. If the Council is reliant on external sources for information or services any additional delay may be beyond our control. We will inform you if there is reason to expect a delay.

If you have difficulty in obtaining any document please contact the Information Officer. The address is given in Section 3.4

### **3.2 Access via Council's website**

It is intended that a large number of the documents which fall within the publication scheme will be available via the website. Some publications are already on the website and as others are developed these will be placed on the website. The Council is continually reviewing its on-line provision of certain services, so changes will be ongoing.

The website is at [www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk).

### **3.3 The cost of obtaining publications**

In general it is the Council's policy to provide publications within the Publication Scheme free of charge. Future access to electronic documents via the website will not usually involve an access charge or charge for printing documentation, unless documents are printed at Council access points where such charges are standard (for example, in public libraries, where a charge per sheet is made for printing). Where such documents are provided by outside sources, the website or staff member contacted will direct the enquiry to the appropriate source if multiple copies of the document have not been supplied for distribution.

Some plans which the Council publishes will have a cover price. Where such a document is requested you will be notified of the cost and any payment will need to be received before the publication can be sent out.

If information is requested electronically on floppy disk or CD-ROM a charge may be made to cover the costs of software.

Standard charges for photocopies and other disbursements are listed in Section 5.



The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limits and Fees Regulations) 2004 makes provision for charges for administering a request made under the Freedom of Information Act. Administration is free up to a limit of £450 (calculated as 18 hours of staff time at £25 an hour). Over this limit the full cost of administering the request is chargeable (so a request which takes 19 hours to administer would be charged at 19 hours of staff time, not 1 hour). The Council is also empowered to refuse to process a request where it is calculated that the staff time involved will be in excess of the 18 hour limit. Where a decision is taken to charge for administering a request, the Council can request full payment of the estimated cost, although if the time taken is less than estimated, the excess will be refunded. There is no requirement on the Council to carry out any part of the request until payment is received, and where any fee or charge applies, the Council is not required to provide information until payment is made, nor does the 20 working day timescale recommence until payment is made in response to a letter or email advising of the cost of the request.

### **3.4 Contact details for obtaining information or documents**

In certain cases information can be accessed directly from the Council's Website

[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

In addition there is a list of addresses and other contact details for Council staff at:

<http://www.westberks.gov.uk/WestBerkshire/council.nsf/pages/ServiceUnits.html>

If you have not found the item on the website, and do not know which service unit to contact, you should write or email, marking all correspondence:

**“Freedom of Information Act – Publication Scheme request”** and address the request to:

The Information Officer

Information & Communication

West Berkshire Council

Council Offices

Market Street

Newbury

Berks RG14 5LD

Email: [Scbroughton@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Scbroughton@westberks.gov.uk)

## **4. CLASSES OF INFORMATION**

As explained earlier, part of the Council's duty under the Freedom of Information Act is to include in the Publication Scheme an organised list of the categories of information which it publishes, known as "classes" for the purposes of the Scheme.

The format of the classes is arranged as follows:

Each "class" includes:

a general description of the types of information covered within that class;

a description of the class;

examples of the information contained within that class;

guidance on the format and costs of the information;

The list of classes and their sub-categories may contain references to information which the Council does not yet publish but may do in the future. The classes will continue to be reviewed as the Freedom of Information Act operates.

**In all cases** the classes exempt any information capable of constituting exempt information for the purposes of Part II of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This information may still be requested, but staff will have to apply a Public Interest Test to determine whether the information can be released.

## PUBLICATION SCHEME: CLASSES OF INFORMATION

Class	Description of class	Examples of information	Format	Cost
<b>1. West Berkshire Council – Council Organisation, Political and Staff Establishment, Geographic Area</b>				
<b>1.1 West Berkshire Council Structure &amp; Organisation</b>				
<b>1.1.1 Council structure and organisation</b>	Information on the organisation and management structures of the Council	Management structure maps Service structures and guides to the corporate roles and responsibilities of the services	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.1.2 Council establishment</b>	Information on recruitment and employment Internal staff handbooks and guidance	Employment policies and procedures (eg disciplinary etc.) Employment guidance (eg Staff Handbook) Job Vacancies Corporate Performance management processes Staff benefits, facilities, terms & conditions	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.1.3 Internal health and safety</b>	Health and safety	Policies, procedures and statements, and review arrangements for health and safety within the organisation .	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.1.4 Accounts</b>	Finance and contracts	Summarised information relating to the financial management, control and use of Council resources for the current year (from 2001/2002).	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.1.5 Policies, Plans &amp; Strategies</b>	Supporting documentation for the Council's current and future service policies, provision and performance, both best practice and statutory.	Corporate Policy documents Corporate Strategies Corporate Plan Comprehensive Performance Assessment Best Value Performance Plans & Reports IEG – Electronic Government statements and plans West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006	Hard copy/ electronic	Free
<b>1.1.6 Minutes</b>	Minutes of Corporate Board Meetings	Minutes of meetings	Hard copy/ electronic	

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>1.1.7 Partnerships</b>	Information on the Partnership organisations	Partnership methodologies, agreements, supporting documents, lists of members	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.1.8 Local Initiatives</b>	Local plans and other initiatives for which the authority is responsible or in which it has a stakeholder interest	Green Travel Plans Cultural Strategy Berkshire Structure Plan Village Design Plans	Hard copy/ electronic	

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>1.2 West Berkshire Council Political Establishment</b>				
<b>1.2.1 Council Constitution</b>	Democratic processes of the Council	Constitution and accompanying notes or papers	Hard copy/ electronic	Free
<b>1.2.2 Members of the European Parliament for WBC area</b>	Information on local European Parliamentary representatives	Contact details for local European MPs and EU Parliamentary officials	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.2.3 Members of the UK Parliament for WBC area</b>	Information on local UK Parliamentary representatives	Contact details for local UK MPs and Parliamentary officials	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.2.4 Councillors</b>	Contacts, duties and interests of Councillors, their expenses and register of disclosures.	Contact details for local Councillors Registers of interest Register of disclosures Expense notifications Lists of committees	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.2.5 Wards</b>	Information on the Wards	Ward boundaries		
<b>1.2.6 Agenda papers and minutes</b>	Papers and plans published in respect of Council meetings and area forums open to the public and press. Legal exemptions may apply to Part II reports and papers.	Minutes of committees Agendas of committees Forward Plan for Council meetings Area forums – minutes, agendas and members	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.2.7 Elections</b>	Information on local and national elections	Election Results – Local Government Election Results – National Government Information on voting, electoral registers	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.2.8 District, Town &amp; Parish Councils</b>	Information on the district and parish councils – this information provided by the organisations concerned	Contacts for District, Town & Parish Councillors, and other officials Registers of interest Parish Plans Contacts for parish clerks	Hard copy/ electronic	

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>1.3 West Berkshire Council Statutory Regulation</b>				
<b>1.3.1 Byelaws, legislation and other regulations</b>	Legislation, Regulations and Byelaws under which the Council operates	WBC Byelaws Local Government Acts	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.3.2 Statutory Registers</b>	Registers available to the public under statutory provision	All Registers of licensed premises and businesses Electoral registers	Hard copy/ electronic	

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>1.4 West Berkshire Area</b>				
<b>1.4.1 Demographic information</b>	Demographic, statistical and economic information about West Berkshire area	Mayor & Town Council details Neighbouring Councils Local Business Finance and Economy Facts and Figures about West Berkshire	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>1.4.2 Community information</b>	Community organisations and businesses within West Berkshire area	Community organisations Clubs and Societies Halls for Hire	Hard copy/ electronic	

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>2. Communication and Consultation</b>				
<b><u>2.1 Council Public Relations</u></b>	Public communications including newsletters and press releases. Corporate design and image.	Press releases West Berkshire News Other external newsletters Condolence books Corporate image and design Press cuttings	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b><u>2.2 Council Consultations</u></b>	Consultations, reports and background papers emanating from consultations with the public, partners and other stakeholders.	Consultations and final consultation documents	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b><u>2.3 Council Publication Scheme</u></b>	Publication scheme	Publication scheme and associated guidance on FoI, EIR and access	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b><u>2.4 Council Compliance with Open Access legislation</u></b>	FoI & EIR Request Responses – held for 3 years	Responses	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b><u>2.5 Data Protection</u></b>	Access to personal information	Guidance and information on accessing personal data	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b><u>2.6 Fees and charges</u></b>	Information on fees and charges applicable for access to information	Data Protection fees FoI Administration charges and advice EIR fees		

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>3 Council Services available to the Public</b>				
<b>3.1 Directories of services</b>	Directories of all WBC service provision			
<b>3.1.1 Service contacts</b>	Directories of service contact details	Location of service, contact details for officer/s responsible for provision	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>3.1.2 Service description</b>	Service description and operation	Service description Budgets, staffing and other resources allocated to service delivery	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>3.1.3 Service availability</b>	Information on service availability	Directory of opening hours Availability of out of hours service Emergency contacts	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>3.1.3 Service delivery</b>	Information on service delivery	Procedures for delivering the service, guidance and advice on access	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>3.1.4 Service fees and charges</b>	Information on fees and charges	Publication costs for published books or leaflets Search fees for discretionary services Photocopy costs Fees for application or registration	Hard copy/ electronic	

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>3.2 Service administration</b>	Guidance on how the service is administered Regulatory or statistical performance reporting			
<b>3.2.1 Service administration and performance</b>	Information on the administration and performance of the service	Annual Reports Service Plans Service Standards Performance against Service Standards Summaries of recent performance Service Policies & Procedures Plans for service development	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>3.2.2 Minutes</b>	Minutes of Senior Management Team Meetings	Minutes of meetings	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>3.2.3 Complaints</b>	Public complaints procedure	Information about how to make a complaint using the WBC complaints procedure.	Hard copy/ electronic	
<b>3.2.4 Ombudsman reports</b>	Ombudsman reports	All formal reports issued by the Local Government Ombudsman following investigation of complaints against the Council for the last 5 years.	Hard copy	

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>4 Emergency Planning and Civil Contingencies</b>				
<b><u>4.1 Council Emergency Planning Service</u></b>	Information on the Council Emergency Planning Service	Service provision and coverage Contact details Major incident plan Civil contingencies plan Training provision for major incidents Business continuity planning advice Emergency Planning Partnerships	Hard copy/electronic	
<b><u>4.2 Service provision for major incidents</u></b>	Information in respect of defined dangers or threats Information in respect of specific incidents	Guidance on what to do in event of a terrorist attack. Guidance on what to do in event of a flood Flooding information Contact details for flood wardens Flood Maps Response to road traffic accidents/highways emergencies Government guidance Individual guidance on specific incidents	Hard copy/electronic	

<b>Class</b>	<b>Description of class</b>	<b>Examples of information</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>5 Regulatory Enforcement</b>				
<b><u>5.1 Crime &amp; Disorder Management</u></b>	Crime and disorder policies and processes	Policies and processes for crime and disorder management		
<b><u>5.2 Prosecutions</u></b>	Information on prosecutions, court orders and similar enforcement activity	ASBOS information Prosecutions – publicly available information and statistics		





## **Copyright Statement**

The copyright in the material listed in this Publication Scheme is owned by West Berkshire District Council unless otherwise stated. The supply of documents under Freedom of Information does not give the person or organisation who receives them an automatic right to re-use the documents in a way that would infringe copyright, for example, by making multiple copies, publishing and issuing copies to the public.

Brief extracts of the material may be reproduced under the fair dealing provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (sections 29 and 30) for the purposes of research for non-commercial purposes, private study, criticism, review and news reporting.

## **Reuse of Public Sector Information**

Details of the arrangements for reusing information owned by West Berkshire Council can be found on the Council website at <http://www.westberks.gov.uk/westberkshire/isite.nsf/disclaimer> or by contacting the Public Relations Manager:

Keith Ulyatt

Information & Communication  
Council Offices  
Market Street  
Newbury RG14 5LD  
01635 5198125

Authorisation to re-use copyright material not owned by West Berkshire District Council should be sought from the copyright holders concerned. If in doubt, users should contact the Council in the first instance.

## **5. CHARGES**

A separate fees regime written in May 2005, following publication of the 2004 Fees Regulations, is available on the website or in hard copy from the Information Officer, Information & Communication and will be reviewed annually. The introduction of any further statutory obligations will also trigger a review of these arrangements. The fees regime covers charges for photocopying, copies from microfilm, copies on CD Rom or floppy disc, and discretionary charges, as well as postage. Copies for published materials will be listed against the individual items, and in publication lists available on the website and in hard copy.

## **6. ACCESS TO INFORMATION NOT COVERED BY THE SCHEME**

### **6.1 Full rights of access**

As mentioned in the Introduction in Section 1, the Freedom of Information Act was introduced incrementally. The Council's development of its Publication Scheme was the first stage and under the law the Council is required to publish all routinely available documentation. This is the information set out in Section 4.

From the first of January 2005 rights of access have been introduced which enable you to request any information held by the Council. This is not restricted to the information listed in the Publication Scheme, although unlisted information may have been excluded because the Council does not hold it, or it is exempt. The information in section 3.4 tells you where to look for information and who to contact if you cannot find it.

There may be some types of documents or information which we have overlooked or had not considered should be available, but which you may consider would assist you. The Council will consider such requests in the context of the Publication Scheme, and you should let us know any suggestion that you may have or improvements which you feel will be useful in our reviews and development of the scheme in the future using the procedure set out in Section 7.

### **6.2 Access to records / personal information**

Some information which we hold is covered by the Data Protection Act 1998, and is automatically exempt from the Freedom of Information Act. If you require personal information, about yourself or others, you should use the application form 'Personal Information – your right to know' or contact the Information Officer (see address details in section 3.4). There will usually be a fee of £10 for such information, although this is waived in certain circumstances. In general, personal information about others is withheld under the Act to protect their privacy, but some personal information supplied by others may be available. If you make a Freedom of Information request which we consider is a request for personal data, we will inform you in writing, providing information on the correct procedure and requesting a fee.

## **6.3 Access to environmental information**

A statutory right to environmental information is included within the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, published in July 2004 and in force from January 2005. Although this means requests for environmental information are exempt under Freedom of Information, this information must still be provided by the authority. In practice, this will make little difference to anyone making an enquiry, although the timescale for responding to enquiries and the fees or charges for information may be a little different. If you make a Freedom of Information request which we consider is a request under the Environmental Information Regulations, we will inform you in writing, providing information on the appropriate timescales and requesting any fee.

## **7. FEEDBACK AND MONITORING**

### **7.1 The Legal Requirements**

Section 19 of the Freedom of Information Act requires:

- (1) It should be the duty of every public Authority
  - (a) to adopt and maintain a scheme which relates to the publication of information by the Authority and is approved by the Commissioner (in this Act referred to as a "Publication Scheme")
  - (b) to publish information in accordance with the Publication Scheme;  
and
  - (c) from time to time review its publication scheme

In other words, the Council has to:

- make sure information within its Scheme is up to date
- make sure that when new information becomes available to the Council it is added to the Publication Scheme
- ensure that this scheme is easy to understand and use.
- promptly deal with any requests for information or publications

In order to achieve these goals the Council will:

- Review the scheme regularly and at least every year when all the Council's services will be asked to check that information which they provide is still available and that contact names are current as well as updating any documents which fall within the Publication Scheme.
- Develop a means of adding any new information resources regularly and effectively to the Publication Scheme
- Ensure most published information is readily available in electronic format and can be accessed through the Council's website
- Ask users of the Publication Scheme for their views and feedback.
- Ask users how efficient we are in dealing with requests for information

### **7.2 Feedback**

The Council welcomes your comments and views on various aspects of the Publication Scheme. If you have asked for information, did you find it easy to get access to the information, or a copy of the document you were looking for?

- Were the contact details useful
- Was your request for information dealt with helpfully and promptly

The Council will use any comments it receives to develop and improve the Publication Scheme in the future additions.

If you have any comments please send them to: **Information Officer**, Information & Communication West Berkshire Council, Market Street, Newbury, RG14 5LD or by email to: **scbroughton@westberks.gov.uk**.

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