



# Seaton Town Council Constitution

## Chapter 12 Freedom of Information Policy

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The publication scheme ('the Scheme') adopted by Seaton Town Council ('the Council') is based on the model scheme prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner, which may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice.
- 1.2 The Scheme commits the Council to make information held, as part of its normal business activities, available to the public.

## **2. Classes of information**

### **2.1 Who we are and what we do.**

Organizational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

### **2.2 What we spend and how we spend it.**

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

### **2.3 What our priorities are and how we are doing.**

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

### **2.4 How we make decisions.**

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

### **2.5 Our policies and procedures.**

Current written protocols for delivering functions and responsibilities.

### **2.6 Lists and registers.**

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

### **2.7 The services we offer.**

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions, and media releases. A description of the services offered.

## **3. Classes of information held 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. The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available**

4.1 The Council will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by the Scheme and how it can be obtained.

4.2 Where it is within the capability of the Council, information will be provided on its website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website, or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, the Council's Scheme sets out how information can be obtained by other means.

4.3 In exceptional circumstances, 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.

4.4 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 information, it will arrange to do so.

4.5 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.

## **5. Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme**

5.1 The purpose of the 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.

5.2 Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided 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
- the costs directly incurred, as a result of viewing information

5.3 Charges may also be made for information provided under the 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.

5.4 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.

**6. Written requests**

- 6.1 Information held by the Council that is not published under the Scheme can be requested in writing, and any such requests will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.
  
- 11.2 The Council will respond to such a request within 20 working days. If the Council is unable to share the information the letter will explain why.