

 <p>BROADSTAIRS &amp; ST. PETER'S TOWN COUNCIL</p>	<p><b>Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme</b></p>
	<p><b>BROADSTAIRS &amp; ST. PETER'S TOWN COUNCIL</b>  <b>Adopted: 28<sup>th</sup> January 2019</b>  <b>Reviewed: October 2025</b>  <b>Approved: 27 October 2025</b></p>

**1. Policy Scope**

1.1 To set out how Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council will manage requests made for information<sup>1</sup> under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

**2. Introduction**

2.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by Public Authorities. Under the Act, Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council has two main responsibilities:

- to produce a Publication Scheme
- deal with individual requests for information.

**3. The Publication Scheme**

3.1 In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council has to publish The Publication Scheme (see Appendix 1). The Publication Scheme commits the Town Council to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities.

3.2 Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council will ensure that members of the public are aware of the information that is made readily available to them and provide details of how this information can be accessed<sup>1</sup>.

3.3 Wherever possible Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council will provide information through its website. Where information is available in a non-electronic form or when an individual does not wish to access information electronically, an individual can contact the Town Clerk and ask for the information to be made available to them.

3.4 Some information may only be available to view in person at Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council's premises<sup>2</sup>. In these circumstances an appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

**4. Making a Freedom of Information Request**

4.1 A request for information must be made in writing to the Town Clerk. This can either be a hard copy or electronically.

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<sup>1</sup>Information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings (please view our CCTV policy on our website- [www.broadstairs.gov.uk](http://www.broadstairs.gov.uk))

<sup>2</sup> For example, the historic minute books of the Council.

4.2 A request for information must state the name of the applicant and an address for correspondence. Applicants must provide their real name and not use a pseudonym. Both email and postal addresses are acceptable.

4.3 A request for information must also adequately describe the information sought. Although not a requirement by law, it would help if requests were marked 'Freedom of Information Request' to insure a prompt response.

4.4 Most Freedom of Information requests will be free of charge. However, there may be a small charge for disbursements. Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council will notify the enquirer in advance if there are any charges associated with the request.

4.5 Disbursements charges could include:

- production (e.g. redaction exempt information, printing or photocopying)
- transmission costs (Postage and packing)
- complying with the applicant's preferences about the format in which they would like to receive the information (e.g. scanning to a CD, memory stick)

## **5. Data Protection Act 2018**

5.1 A request for a persons own personal data will be dealt with under the subject access provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

5.2 When someone makes a request for information that includes someone else's data, Broadstairs and St. Peters Town Council will need to carefully balance the case for transparency and openness under the Freedom of Information Act against the data subjects right to privacy under the Data Protection Act in deciding whether the information can be released without breaching the Data Protection principles

## **6. Exemptions**

6.1 Anyone making a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and supplied with it. Some information does not have to be revealed, such as personal information or commercially sensitive data. You can view a full list of these exemptions on the Information Commissioner's website – [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

6.2 Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council can turn down a Freedom of Information Request if it will cost more than £450 to respond to.

6.3 Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council may ask for the request to be more specific in order for the information to be provided.

6.4 If Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council refuses to provide the information requested, the enquirer can ask them to review their decision. If the enquirer is still not satisfied with the response received, they are advised to contact the Information Commissioner's Office.

## **7. Vexatious Requests**

7.1 Under Section 14 (1) of the act it is not obligated to provide substantive response to a request if the request is vexatious.

7.2 When a request is so unreasonable or objectionable that it is clear it is a vexatious request. For example, an abusive or offensive request that causes an unjustifiable level of distress or where threats are, or have been, made against staff.

7.3 In other circumstances it may be less obvious that a request is considered vexatious. Broadstairs and St. Peters Town Council will consider a request to be vexatious where the request is likely to cause a disproportionate or unjustified level of disruption, irritation or distress. This also includes:

- The burden it places on Broadstairs and St. Peters Town Council and its staff.
- The likely motives of the request.
- The potential value or purpose of the request.
- Any harassment or distress to staff.
- When an applicant has engaged in a large volume of sustained correspondence over a number of years in an abusive or confrontational language.
- If there is a deliberate 'campaign' by a number of requesters to purposely disrupt the Town Council's activities and functions via a high volume of requests on the same or similar topics.

7.4 Broadstairs and St. Peters Town Council will also consider the following questions when deciding if a request is vexatious:

- What is the burden imposed on The Town Council by this request?
- Is there a personal grudge behind this request?
- Is the requester unreasonably persisting in seeking information in relation to issues already addressed by the Town Council?
- Does the request have a serious purpose or value?
- What other requests have been made by the same requester?

## **8. Response**

8.1 Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council will respond to all Freedom of Information Requests within 20 working days.

## **9. Monitoring**

9.1 All requests made to the Council will be filed and referenced FOI. They will be held in accordance with the Council's General Data Protection Regulation policy, this means they will be shredded 5 years after the request has been marked as completed.

## **10. Policy Review**

10.1 Broadstairs & St. Peter's Town Council will review this Policy as is necessary and appropriate, and at a minimum on a 2 yearly basis.

 <p>BROADSTAIRS &amp; ST. PETER'S TOWN COUNCIL</p>	<h2>Information available from Broadstairs and St Peter's Town Council under the model publication scheme</h2>
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Information to be published	How the information can be obtained
<p><b>Class1 - Who we are and what we do</b> (Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts)</p> <p>This will be current information only.</p>	
Who's who on the Council and its Committees	website
Contact details for Parish Clerk and Council members (named contacts where possible with telephone number and email address (if used))	website
Location of main Council office and accessibility details	website
Staffing structure	website
<p><b>Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it</b> (Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit)</p>	

Current and previous financial year as a minimum	
Annual return form and report by auditor	website
Finalised budget	website
Precept	website
Borrowing Approval letter	Not held
Financial Standing Orders and Regulations	website
Grants given and received	website
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Hard copy
Members' allowances and expenses	website

<p><b>Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing</b> (Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews)</p> <p>Current and previous year as a minimum</p>	
Action Plan (current and previous year as a minimum)	website
Quality status	website
<p><b>Class 4 – How we make decisions</b> (Decision making processes and records of decisions)</p> <p>Current and previous council year as a minimum</p>	(hard copy or website)
Timetable of meetings (Council and any committee and Town Assembly meetings)	website
Agendas of meetings (as above)	website
Minutes of meetings (as above)	website
Reports presented to council meetings – n.b. this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.	website
Responses to consultation papers	Not held
Responses to planning applications	website
Bye-laws	Not held
<p><b>Class 5 – Our policies and procedures</b> (Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities)</p> <p>Current information only</p>	
<p>Policies and procedures for the conduct of council business:</p> <p>Standing Orders Financial Regulations Committee and sub-committee terms of reference Delegated authority in respect of officers Code of Conduct Policy statements</p>	All on website

<p>Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff:</p> <p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy  Health and safety policy  Recruitment policies (including current vacancies)  Policies and procedures for handling requests for information  Complaints procedures (including those covering requests for information and operating the publication scheme)</p>	All on website
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Records management policies (records retention, destruction and archive)	Hard copy
Data protection policies	website
Schedule of charges (for the publication of information)	As below

## **Class 6 – Lists and Registers**

Currently maintained lists and registers only

Any publicly available register or list (if any are held this should be publicised; in most circumstances existing access provisions will suffice)

Not held

Assets register

Hard copy

Disclosure log (indicating the information that has been provided in response to requests; recommended as good practice, but may not be held by parish councils)

Hard copy

Register of members' interests

website

Register of gifts and hospitality

Hard copy

## **Class 7 – The services we offer**

(Information about the services we offer, including leaflets, guidance and newsletters produced for the public and businesses)

Current information only

Allotments

Burial grounds and closed churchyards

Not held

Community centres and village halls

Not held

Parks, playing fields and recreational facilities

Not held

Seating, litter bins, clocks, memorials and lighting

Not held

Bus shelters

Not held

Markets

Not held

Public conveniences

Not held

Agency agreements

Not held

Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees (e.g. burial fees)	Not held
<b>Additional Information</b> This will provide Councils with the opportunity to publish information that is not itemised in the lists above	Not held

**Contact details: Town Clerk, Princess Victoria Suite, Pierremont Hall, Broadstairs CT10 1JX**

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES: This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

<b>TYPE OF CHARGE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>BASIS OF CHARGE</b>
<b>Disbursement cost</b>	Photocopying @ 1p per sheet (black & white)	Actual cost *
	Photocopying @ 5p per sheet (colour)	Actual cost
	Postage	Actual cost of Royal Mail standard 2 <sup>nd</sup> class
<b>Statutory Fee</b>		In accordance with the relevant legislation (quote the actual statute)
<b>Other</b>		

\* the actual cost incurred by the public authority