

GUIDANCE ON PUBLICATION SCHEMES, CLASSES OF INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE TO INFORMATION

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – PUBLICATION SCHEME

In implementing the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Bury Metropolitan Council promotes an understanding of the work undertaken within the Council, to foster a spirit of trust with the public and other organisations. We achieve this by promoting transparency in the way we make our decisions and by providing clear information about our policies and processes through our publication scheme. We deal with individual requests for information courteously and promptly and provide advice and assistance if necessary.

What is Freedom of Information?

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities. It lists exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities.

The Act came into force in two stages:-

- The first stage was in February 2003 when Bury Metropolitan Borough Council adopted a Publication Scheme.
- The second stage came into force in January 2005. Any person now making a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and supplied with that information. This is subject to a number of exemptions listed in the Act.

What is a Publication Scheme?

A Publication Scheme is a guide to the classes of information that the Council publishes or intends to publish routinely. The term "published" is broad and is not limited to information produced in paper forms. As far as the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is concerned, information made publicly available has been published. Therefore, information on the Council's website is as much part of the Publication Scheme as printed documents.

What are classes of information?

A requirement of the Act is to specify "classes" of information that the Council will publish within its Publication Scheme.

The Information Commissioner has issued a '**Model Publication Scheme**' and from 1 January 2009 Bury Metropolitan Borough Council has adopted the 'Model Scheme'.

The Model Scheme contains 7 classes of information and these are as follows:-

- **Who we are and what we do**
- **What we spend and how we spend it**
- **What our priorities are and how we are doing**
- **How we make decisions**
- **Our policies and procedures**
- **Lists and registers**
- **The service we offer**

Examples of the type of information available are given below under the **Guide to Information**.

By adopting the Information Commissioner's 'Model Scheme' Bury Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to the following:-

- To proactively publish information (including environmental information which is held by it and contained within each class).
- To provide a means by which the Authority can ensure the public are aware of the sorts of the information the Council has committed to make readily available, how they can access it and whether they will have to pay for it.
- To review and update the information on a regular basis and in accordance with The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Publication Scheme Review Guidance.

How will I request additional information not covered by this Scheme?

The Council includes as much information in the Publication Scheme as it can, however, if you cannot find what you are looking for you can make a request of the information.

The Act is retrospective and information requests can be for information created before the Act came fully into force in 2005. However, where any of the information comes within an exempt category either under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or other relevant legislation, it will be published with the exempt material deleted.

Will I be charged for information?

Material which is published and accessed on the website can be downloaded free of charge. Some information may only be available in hard copy and some information

will only be available for inspection. Charges may be made for information subject to a legal charging regime. Charges under the publication scheme may be made for actual disbursements such as:-

- Photocopying
- Printing
- Postage and packaging
- The cost directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Any charges will be in accordance with the Council's policy.

Who do I contact?

For information concerning the scheme or if you wish to make a request for other information you can contact the following:

Emergency Out of Hours (0161 253 6606)

(Emergency housing repairs, out of hours contact for social workers, homeless families, building control, pest control, emergency planning officers, cleansing and fritting, asylum team contact, homecare contacts, security).

- **Bury Council Switchboard** 0161 253 5000
- **Council Tax** 0161 253 5656 CouncilTax@bury.gov.uk
- **Housing Benefits** 0161 253 5008 HousingBenefits@bury.gov.uk
- **Business Rates** 0161 253 5035 BusinessRates@bury.gov.uk
- **Six Town Housing** 0161 686 8000 Enquiries@SixTownHousing.org
- **Housing Repairs** 0161 253 5368 HosingRepairs@bury.gov.uk
- **Castle Leisure Centre** 0161 253 6513 Castle.Leisure@bury.gov.uk
- **Sports centres and swimming pools**
- **Customer Contact Team (0161 253 5353)**
CustomerContactTeam@bury.gov.uk
(allotments, bollards, Bury Street Care, bulky household collections, composting, countryside management, domestic waste paper collections, drainage, flooding, grass cutting, grounds maintenance, gritting, gully cleansing, leaf clearance, litter, pavements, parks and open spaces, pest control, play areas, public gardens, public rights of way, public toilets, recycling, rubbish collection, road repairs, scaffold permits, skip permits, street cleaning, street nameplates ,street lighting, trees, tree pruning programme, vehicle crossings)
- **Civic Hall** central booking buryvenues@bury.gov.uk
- **Archives** (local history) archives@bury.gov.uk
- Library contacts
- **Tourist Information Centre** touristinformation@bury.gov.uk
- **Disabled Services** 0161 253 6858 DisabilityServices@bury.gov.uk
- **Licensing** 0161 253 5209 Licensing@bury.gov.uk
- **Registrars** 0161 253 6026 Registeroffice@bury.gov.uk
- **Social Services (Adult)** 0161 253 7190 SocialServices-AdultEnquiries

- **Social Services (Children)** 0161 253 5454 @bury.gov.uk
SocialServices-ChildrenEnquiries@bury.gov.uk
- Social Services contacts
- **Child care** Childinfo@bury.gov.uk
- **Adult Education** 0161 253 7501
- **Lifelong Learning** (Student Services) Studentservice@bury.gov.uk
- **Education** (Children's Services) 0161 253 5652 Childrens.Services@bury.gov.uk
- **Dog Wardens** 0845 0941209
- **Trading Standards** 0845 4040506 Trading Standards contacts
(Consumer and retail issues)
(Any insects/rodents/birds)
- **Pest Control** 0161 253 5353
- **Environmental Health** 0161 253 5566 EnvironmentalHealth@bury.gov.uk
(Noise/air pollution/contaminated land, animal welfare, health an safety in public buildings, urban renewal)
- **Planning Department** 0161 253 5314 Planning@bury.gov.uk (Application forms and advice, submissions of applications, information on planning and building regulations process, planning building regulations fees and information regarding planning committee meetings)
- **Building Control** 0161 253 5313 Buildingcontrol@bury.gov.uk
(Regulations advice, building construction matters, dangerous buildings an structures, street naming and numbering)
- **Development Control** 0161 253 5432 Development.Control@bury.gov.uk
(Advice on whether proposals need planning permission, current planning applications enforcement – complaints about breaches of control/unauthorised developments, appeals against refusal of planning permission)

Submitting an Appeal or making a complaint

If you are not satisfied with the Council's response to a request for information, you may appeal the decision or make a complaint to the address below:-

Jayne Hammond
Lead Reviewing Officer
Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Bury Council
Town Hall
Knowsley Street
Bury
BL9 0SW

Telephone: 0161 253 5000

Email: j.m.hammond@bury.gov.uk

If after going through the Council's appeals process you are still not satisfied, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 makes provision for you to complain directly to the Information Commissioner's Office:-

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

<http://www.ico.gov.uk/>

If you have any suggestions or compliments, we need to know so that we can improve our service to you. Feedback forms are available by contacting:

<http://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3548>

Advice and Assistance

If you need help to make a request for information you may contact the following:

Customer Services Section 0161 253 5236 and you will be referred to one of the Council's Information Officers for the relevant Department who will be able to advise you further.

Reviewing and Maintaining the Scheme

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 states that a publication scheme should be reviewed from time to time. The Council is responsible for reviewing and maintaining this guide to information and the data it contains. Material will be updated and any outdated information will be removed. This guide and the operation of the scheme will be reviewed annually in accordance with The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Publication Scheme Review Guidance.

Copyright

Reproducing material supplied under this Publication Scheme without the express permission of the Council may be an infringement of copyright. Requests for permission should be addressed to the Corporate Information Officer (Contact details above)

Guide to Information

The Council's web pages provide a guide to the information available and there is also a search facility to assist you to find information.

www.bury.gov.uk

The term "published" is broad and is not limited to information made available via the website. Some information may be published in paper form.

The guidance below is intended to assist you by giving some examples of the type of information the Council routinely makes available.

Where a document is indicated within this guidance it will be the current version.

1. WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

- **Council Constitution**

The Council's Constitution.

- **Council democratic structure**

Information about the functioning and process of meetings (Council Meetings, Executive and other Committees). Information about decision-making and scrutiny.

- **Council directorate structure**

Information about the various directorate areas within the Council, plus contact details for the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors.

- **Location and opening times of Council properties**

Information about locations, opening times and contact details of all the Council's centres/buildings, which are there to enable the public to access Council Services.

- **Currently elected Councillors' information and contact details**

Currently elected councillors including part, membership of committees, address, telephone number and email contact.

- **Contact details for all customer-facing departments**

Telephone numbers for customer contacts or one-stop shops.

- **Most recent election results**

Election results indicating the political composition of the Council.

- **Relationships with other authorities**

Information, for example, about the Greater Manchester Fire Service, The Association of Greater Authorities, Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive and the Waste Disposal Authority.

2. WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT

- **Financial statements, budgets and budget monitoring reports**

The Council's Statement of Accounts.

- **Capital programme**

Asset Management Plan.

- **Spending reviews**

The Council's Statement of Accounts and Committee reports.

- **Financial audit reports**

For example, within District Audit Reports, Annual Governance Reports and Best Value Reports.

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

For example, the allowances members are entitled to claim and the amount each member received in expenses.

- **Staff allowances and expenses**

Mileage, accommodation, subsistence rates that can be claimed by staff.

- **Pay and grading structure**

Salary bands for all grades, including senior and chief officer grades.

- **Details of contracts currently being tendered**

Procurement policies and guidance.

Contracts currently available for their value.

- **List of contracts awarded and their value**

Contracts awarded under the Public Contract Regulations 2006 as published in The Official Journal of the European Union.

- **District auditor's reports**

For example, within District Audit Reports, Annual Governance Reports and Best Value Reports.

- **Financial statements for projects and events**

The Council's Statement of Accounts.

- **Internal financial regulations**

Financial regulations under the Council's Standing Orders, as contained in the Council's Constitution.

- **Funding for partnership arrangements**

Partnership funding, for example, The Children's Fund was launched as part of the Government's commitment to tackle disadvantage among children and young people.

3. WHAT OUR PRIORITIES ARE AND HOW ARE WE DOING

- **Annual reports**

The Council's Annual Report/the Council's Plan.

- **Strategies and business plans for services provided by the Council**

Strategies, business and service plan for directorates, departments and services including The Council Plan and the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan.

- **Best value performance plans**

For example, best value performance plans and auditor's reports.

- **Internal and external organisation performance reviews**

Performance information including, for example, Comprehensive Performance Assessments, The Council Plan and Improvement Plan, performance improvement plans for departments.

- **Strategies developed in partnership with other authorities**

For example, housing strategies and plans, education strategies, homeless strategies, customer involvement strategies, crime reduction strategies.

- **Economic development action plan**

Economic development strategy and plan.

- **Forward plan**

The Council's Forward Plan which details the Key Decisions that the Council is going to take over a four month period.

- **Capital strategy**

Asset Management Plan.

- **Best value performance indicators**

Information about the Council's Best Value Performance Plan and about inspections and annual governance reports.

- **District Auditor's reports on the best value performance plan and performance indicators**

For example, within District Audit Reports within the Annual Report and Best Value Reports.

- **Comprehensive performance assessment**

Information about Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

- **Inspection reports**

Publicly available inspection reports, for example, Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Reports, The Council's Annual Report, and Youth Service Quarterly Reports.

- **Local Area Agreements**

Partnership agreements made by the Council by working with various groups and partnerships in the public, private, voluntary, community and faith sectors.

- **Statistical information produced in accordance with the Council's and departmental requirements**

For example, information about schools attendance, and population and employment.

- **Impact assessments**

Executive Reports containing Impact Assessment (Such as Equality Impact Assessments)

- **Service standards**

Customer Charter and Service Standards.

- **Public service agreements**

Local public service agreements.

4. HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

- **Timetable of council meetings**

Committee dates for the current year.

- **Agendas, officers' reports, background papers and minutes of council committee, sub committee and standing forum meetings**

Public information on the Council's decision recording system.

- **Major policy proposals and decisions**

Information on The Council's Forward Plan and via public information on the Council's decision recording system.

- **Facts and analysis of facts considered when framing major policies**

Information on The Council's Forward Plan and via public information on the Council's decision recording system.

- **Public consultations**

Consultation papers or information, any summary of the responses and the outcome of the consultation exercise.

5. OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- **Policies and procedures for conducting council business**

The Council's Constitution.

- **Policies and procedures about the recruitment and employment of staff**

For example, employment information, current vacancies, Recruitment Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Human Recourses Policy, Health and Safety Policy.

- **Customer service**

For example, Customer Service Charter and Complaints Policy.

- **Records management and personal data policies**

For example, Data Protection Policy and Records Management Policy

- **Charging regimes and policies**

For example, Licensing Fees and Charges, Building Control Charges, Service Charges for Council Tenants, Local Land Charges.

6. LISTS AND REGISTERS

Available for inspection only

- **Public registers and registers held as public records**

For example, Index of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Register of Electors, Register of Premises Licences and Club Premises Licences, Register of Hackney Carriage Drivers.

- **Asset registers**

Corporate Asset Management Plan.

- **Register of councillors' financial and other interests**

Register of Members' Interests in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 [Section 81]

- **Highways, licensing, planning, commons, footpaths etc**

For example, Definitive Maps, Register of adopted highways, Register of Planning Applications, Register of Common Land.

- **Register of electors**

The Register of Electors and information about the Register and where it can be inspected.

7. SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL

Details of all the Council's Services can be found in the Council's Directory of Service.

- **Regulatory and licensing responsibilities**

For example, hackney carriage licensing, motor salvage licensing, amusement licensing, liquor licensing.

- **Services for local businesses**

For example, business services and advice in respect of financial support, property advice, business opportunities, recruitment of staff.

- **Services for other organisations**

For example, student groups, youth groups and club activities.

- **Services for members of the public**

Details of all the Council's Services can be found in the Council's Directory of Services.

- **Services for which the council is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees**

For example, Licensing Fees and Charges, Building Control Charges, Service Charges for Council Tenants, Local Land Charges.

- Information for visitors to the area, leisure information, events, museums, libraries and archive collections

Information about the local area.

- **Leaflets, booklets and newsletters**

Various leaflets and council publications available in council offices, district centres, libraries etc.

- **Advice and guidance**

For example, advice on debts and benefits, consumer advice, affordable house.

- **Media releases**

Press statements and releases.

- **Election information**

For example, elections, results, forthcoming elections and voting procedures.