



Freedom of Information Policy

(References to Standing Orders are included in brackets)

Adopted: 9th June 2026

Minute reference: 0806.2

Review date: Annually,

Next scheduled review: May 2027

Responsible officer: Clerk/RFO

Purpose

This policy sets out how Eastfield Town Council will meet its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and ensure transparency and accountability in its operations. (Standing Order 21(a), 21(b))

Scope

This policy applies to all recorded information held by the Council, regardless of format, and to all councillors, officers, and working groups. (Standing Order 21(a))

Publication Scheme

- The Council adopts the model publication scheme as approved by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).
- The scheme is available on the Council's website and in hard copy on request.
- The scheme sets out the classes of routinely published information and how they can be accessed. (Standing Order 21(a), 21(b))

Making a Request

- Requests for information must be made in writing (including email).
- Requests should include the requester's name, address, and a description of the information sought.
- Requests should be sent to the Clerk at the Council's official address or email. (Standing Order 15(b)(viii), 15(b)(xv))

Responding to Requests

- The Council will respond to all valid FOI requests within 20 working days.
- The Council will confirm whether the information is held and provide it unless an exemption applies.
- If a fee is required, the requester will be notified in writing. (Standing Order 15(b)(viii), 21(b))

Exemptions

- Some information may be exempt from disclosure under the FOIA (e.g., personal data, commercially sensitive information, or information prejudicial to the effective conduct of public affairs).

- The Council will explain the reasons for any refusal and inform the requester of their right to appeal. (Standing Order 21, 22)

Charges

- Most information will be provided free of charge.
- Where a charge is necessary (e.g., for photocopying, postage, or significant staff time), the Council will inform the requester in advance. (Standing Order 21(b), FOI Act)

Review and Complaints

- If a requester is dissatisfied with the Council's response, they may request an internal review by writing to the Clerk.
- If still dissatisfied, the requester may appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. (Standing Order 21(b), FOI Act)

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by changes in legislation or guidance. (Standing Order 21(b))

Responsibilities

- The Clerk is the designated officer responsible for managing FOI requests and maintaining the Publication Scheme.
- All councillors and staff must support the Clerk in locating and providing information as required. (Standing Order 15(b)(viii), 15(b)(xv))

Record Keeping

- The Council will maintain a log of all FOI requests received, including the date, nature of the request, response provided, and any exemptions applied.
- This log will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance and identify any areas for improvement. (Good practice, supports Standing Order 21(b))

Data Protection

- The Council will ensure that any disclosure of information under FOI complies with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
- Personal data will not be disclosed unless permitted by law. (Standing Order 22)

Training and Awareness

- The Council will provide training and guidance to councillors and staff on their responsibilities under the FOIA and this policy.
- Updates will be provided as necessary to reflect changes in legislation or best practice. (Supports Standing Order 21(b))

Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Publication Scheme, Data Protection Policy, and Standing Orders. (Standing Order 21(a), 22)