
Agenda Item: Model Publication Scheme

Meeting Date: Monday, 24 November 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to inform and update Councillors on the Council's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and resolve to adopt an updated Model Publication Scheme for the Council.

Background

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives individuals the right to access information held by public authorities. It also sets out the responsibilities of those authorities to disclose information and specifies circumstances where information may be withheld through exemptions. Key features of the Act include; right of access, proactive disclosure, exemptions, and response obligations.

In addition, the Town Council is subject to the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which provide a similar right of access specifically for environmental information.

For further information of Freedom of Information, Members are encouraged to view details here on the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi/what-is-the-foi-act-and-are-we-covered/>

Current Situation

As part of proactive disclosure, the Council must publish information under a publication scheme approved by the ICO. This scheme outlines a commitment to routinely provide certain types of information, such as policies, meeting minutes, reports, and financial data. The information published under the scheme is the minimum required, but individuals can still request anything not included.

At the Town Council, this scheme is published on the website here [WTC Freedom of Information Publication Scheme](#)

Officers have updated the scheme and a draft version, based on the ICO model is attached as **Appendix A** for consideration.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – having the publication scheme in place ensures all those requesting information are treated equally.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The Council must adopt an ICO approved Freedom of Information Publication Scheme to comply with legislation.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider,

1. Adopting the updated Model Publication Scheme for Witney Town Council.