



Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council

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

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – REVISED PUBLICATION SCHEME - JANUARY 2009

In implementing the Freedom of Information Act 2000 Barrow Borough 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 Barrow 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 1ST January 2009 Barrow 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 services 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’ Barrow 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 and whether they will have to pay for it.
- To review and update the information on a regular basis

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 for the information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All requests must be made in writing (for example letter, fax, e-mail, via the website) and must contain the following information:

- Your name (name of applicant) and address for correspondence,
- Description of the information requested.

If the applicant is unable to put their request in writing the relevant assistance will be provided upon request.

The Act is retrospective and information requests can be for information created before the Act came fully in to 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:

The Corporate Services Officer
Barrow Borough Council
Town Hall, Duke Street
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria LA14 3QR
Tel: 01229 876452
Email: foi@barrowbc.gov.uk

The information can be found under the Council's website at the following:
<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=1197>

MAKING A COMPLAINT, SUGGESTION OR COMPLIMENT

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

The Assistant Director (Personnel & Performance)
Barrow Borough Council
Town Hall, Duke Street
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria LA14 3QR
Tel: 01229 876334
Email: jbright@barrowbc.gov.uk

If after going through the Council's formal complaint and appeals system you are still not satisfied then 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.

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

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

The Corporate Services Officer
Barrow Borough Council
Town Hall, Duke Street
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria LA14 3QR
Tel: 01229 876452
Email: foi@barrowbc.gov.uk

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 operation of the scheme will be reviewed annually.

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BARROW BOROUGH COUNCIL'S GUIDE TO INFORMATION

The Council's A-Z of services on our web pages provides a guide to the information available and there is also a search facility to assist you to find other information that may not be included in the A-Z.

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 sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=1448>

- **Council democratic structure**

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

Information about decision-making and scrutiny.

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=360>

- **Council directorate structure**

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

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=360>

- **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. These can be found across the Council's website on the relevant department pages. Information regarding the main department can be found here:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=2677>

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

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

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=79>

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

Telephone numbers for customer contacts:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=86>

- **Most recent election results**

Election results indicating the political composition of the Council:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=363>

- **Relationships with other authorities**

Barrow Borough Council works in partnership with a number of other organisations. Further information can be found here:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=946>

2 WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT

Financial information about projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and financial audit for the current and previous two financial years.

- **Financial statements, budgets and variance reports**

The Council's Statement of Accounts:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=393>

- **Capital programme**

The Capital Programme:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

Asset Management Plan:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/PDF/Asset%20Management%20Plan.pdf>

- **Spending reviews**

The Council's Statement of Accounts, Value for Money Statement:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

- **Financial audit reports**

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

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

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

Allowances and expenses councillors are entitled to claim (the information is contained in Council's Constitution).

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=1448>

Total of the allowances and expenses paid to councillors.

- **Staff allowances and expenses**

Details of allowances and expenses that can be claimed e.g. mileage, subsistence rates.

Total of allowances and expenses paid to individual senior staff members

- **Pay and grading structure**

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

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/docs/salary%20scale%20apr%2008+co.doc>

- **Election expenses (returns or declarations and accompanying documents relating to election expenses sent to the council)**
- **Procurement procedures**

Procurement policy and guidance

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=393>

- **Details of contracts currently being tendered**

Contracts currently available for public tender.

- **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.

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=284>

- **Financial statements for projects and events**

The Council's Statement of Accounts:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

- **Internal financial regulations**

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

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=1448>

- **Funding for partnership arrangements**

Partnership funding for example

3 **WHAT OUR PRIORITIES ARE AND HOW ARE WE DOING**

Strategies and plans, performance indicators, audits, inspections and reviews for current plus previous three years.

- **Annual reports**

The Council's Annual Report :

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

- **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:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=3554>

- **Best value performance plans**

For example best value performance plans and auditor's reports:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=279>

- **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:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=284> and

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

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

For example housing strategies and plans, homeless strategies, crime reduction strategies can be found across the council's website.

- **Capital strategy**

Capital and Asset Management Strategies and Plans:
<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

- **Best value performance indicators**

Information about the Council's Best Value Performance Plan and about inspections and annual governance reports:
<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=279>

- **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 (as above)

- **Comprehensive performance assessment**

Information about Comprehensive Performance Assessment:
<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=284>

- **Inspection reports**

Publicly available inspection reports for example, the Council's Annual Report can be found across the councils website.
<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

- **Local Area Agreements**

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level.

The Cumbria Agreement is the name of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for the county. The Cumbria Agreement is a 3 year plan that sets out key improvement targets for Cumbria.

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

General and economic statistics for the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness. For example, population and employment.
<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=402>

- **Impact assessments**

Executive Reports containing Impact Assessments (such as Equality Impact Assessments)

- **Service standards**

Customer Charter and Service Standards:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

4 HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

Decision-making processes and records of decisions for current and previous three years.

- **Timetable of council meetings**

Committee dates for the current year:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=342>

- **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 can be found via the following link:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=342>

- **Major policy proposals and decisions**
- **Facts and analyses of facts considered when framing major policies**
- **Public consultations**

Details of consultation exercises, consultation papers, results and outcomes of the consultation process.

- **Internal communications guidance, criteria used for decision making, internal instructions, manuals and guidelines**

Internal instructions, manuals and guidelines for dealing with business of the Council that would help the public understand how decisions are made. Information that might damage the Council's operations will not be available.

5 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Current policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities.

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

The Council's Constitution:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=1448>

- **Policies and procedures for delivering our services**

For example Service Area Policies & Procedures, Customer Charter and Equality and Diversity Policy.

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

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

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

- **Customer service**

For example, Customer Service Strategy:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

The council's complaints procedure can be found here:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=113>

- **Records management and personal data policies**

For example Data Protection Policy, Freedom of Information Policy, Retention Policy, Information Security policy:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3554>

- **Charging regimes and policies**

For example Licensing Fees and Charges, Building Control Charges, Service Charges for Council Tenants, Local Land Charges. Details can be found across the council's website.

6 **LISTS AND REGISTERS**

Available for inspection only

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

For example Register of Electors, Register of Premises Licences and Club Premises Licences, Register of Hackney Carriage Drivers.

- **Asset registers and information asset register**

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]

- **Register of gifts and hospitality**
- **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**

Information regarding the services the Council provides including leaflets, guidance and newsletters.

Details of the services the Council provides can be found in the Council's Director of Services (A to Z):

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=10>

- **Regulatory and licensing responsibilities**

For example hackney carriage licensing, motor salvage licensing, amusement licensing, liquor licensing. Details can be found across the Council's website.

- **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.

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=10>

- **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 is available from Barrow Tourist Information Centre:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=148>

- **Leaflets, booklets and newsletters**

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

- **Advice and guidance**

For example advice on debts and benefits, housing etc

- **Media releases**

Press statements and releases.

- **Election Information**

For example election results, review of polling stations, information on becoming a councillor, forthcoming elections and voting procedures:

<http://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=363>