



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

PUBLICATION SCHEME

PUBLICATION SCHEME

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PUBLICATION SCHEME

Freedom of Information Act 2000 Publication Scheme for Down District Council

1 Background

The Down District Council is a local government district council established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to administer a range of social, economic, cultural and environmental services to the local community.

As a public authority the council is required under the Freedom of Information Act to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme setting out the classes of information it holds, the manner in which it publishes/intends to publish the information and the charges it intends to make for the information.

As a public body Down District Council is committed to the highest standards of accountability and openness and this Publication Scheme is prepared to enable the council to fulfil its obligations under the legislation and to better inform the public of its communication and information systems. The information contained in the Scheme will be made available to individuals on request under the terms as detailed in the Scheme.

An individual's right to request information which is not normally published by the Council does not come into force until January 2005.

Overall responsibility for this publication scheme rests with the Director of Corporate Services within Down District Council. The publication scheme is maintained on a day to day basis by Alison White, Principal Administration Officer.

2 Notes on Using the Scheme

This publication scheme sets out the information that Down District Council will publish, how and when it will do so, and whether this information will be available free of charge or on payment. The classes of information to be published are set out under clearly defined headings which reflect the structure and operations of Down District Council.

Publication does not refer solely to printed material. Publication has been interpreted as broadly as possible to include electronic documents, information included on the website, minutes of meetings, reports and leaflets.

It is intended, as far as possible, to make material available on the Down District Council website on an ongoing basis (www.downdc.gov.uk)

3 Requesting Information

Where information is available on the website, a hypertext link will direct you to the correct page on the website. Where information is available by post, a request can be made in writing. Applicants should provide as much detail as possible to identify the information sought. Requests should be addressed to: Mr Norman Stewart, Director of Corporate Services, 24 Strangford Road, Downpatrick, BT30 6SR

4 Charging and Copyright Issues

The council has determined four categories for charging for information requested under this Scheme as follows:

1. **Free of charge.** This includes general facts and information on the services offered to the public as well as information published on the Council's website (for those without internet access, a single print-out of the specific website content can be requested). It also includes answering telephone queries, providing copies of free leaflets and inspection of reference materials at Council Offices.
2. **Priced Publications.** Where the information required is available in a priced publication details of the publication, its cost and where to obtain it will be supplied.
3. **Photocopying costs and postage (plus a small administrative charge).** This covers information which has already been prepared which the Council can photocopy or provide a computer printout. This includes copies of entries in public registers, copies of the Council's internal guidance documents and explanatory material on dealing with the public. There will be a minimum charge of £5 for such requests.
4. **Professional charges for locating and preparing information for release.** Where preparing or gathering the required material can only be done by specialists or other professionals at a charge to the Council, a written estimate will be given of the cost of providing such information. The cost will have to be paid in advance. The Council will then aim to provide the information within a target of 20 days.

Details of how charges are calculated can be found in the Council's 'Charging Structure for Published Information' (see appendix A) VAT is not payable on requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. The Council has the discretion to waive the charges if appropriate.

No charges will be made where a request for information is refused. There will be no charge to appeal against a refusal to supply requested information. Nor will there be a charge to appeal against any charges made for requested information.

Down District Council owns the copyright to the information it produces. If information is to be re-used or reproduced, commercially or otherwise, written approval must be obtained from the office of the Chief Executive.

5 Exempt Information

In order to protect confidential or other information where its disclosure may prejudice the interests of others, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 sets out a series of exemptions.

The classes of information which the Council has specified in this scheme as being classes of information which it publishes or intends to publish may in some cases contain material which we consider to contain exempt information, as defined in Part II of the Act. Accordingly, any such information is excluded from this publication scheme. Where this occurs we outline which information has been withheld and explain what exemption has been applied and why.

Examples of exempt information under Part II of the Act include:

1. Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters
2. Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities
3. Information likely to prejudice law enforcement
4. Court records including records of tribunals and inquiries
5. Information likely to endanger the health and safety of any individual
6. Personal data or information
7. Information provided in confidence
8. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
9. Commercial interests and trade secrets

It should also be noted that information is exempt from the Act if it is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. One example where information would qualify for this exemption is where it is made available via the authority's publication scheme. In instances where someone makes a written request for information which is already available via the publication scheme, the Council will refer the applicant to the scheme.

Where the Council invokes the exemption provisions to withhold information, an applicant may seek a review of the decision.

6 Complaints/Review Procedure

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the response from the Council to a request for information or a response from the Council for requested information is not received within 20 days, the applicant may proceed to a two-stage review process. An *internal* review must normally be completed before an appeal may be made to the Information Commissioner for an *independent* review.

An internal review should be sought through the office of the Chief Executive of the Council, 24 Strangford Road, Downpatrick, BT30 6SR. A member of staff who was not involved with the original request will undertake the review.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied, he/she can seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for a review by the Information Commissioner should be made in writing directly to: The Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF (Tel: 01625 545 700; Fax: 01625 545 510).

7 Categorisation of Classes of Information

The following pages describe the various classes of information, relevant publications and their availability and cost under the following management headings:

- **Corporate Management**
- **Elected Members**
- **Personnel & Recruitment**
- **Financial Performance**
- **Procurement Practices**
- **Licensing & Approvals**
- **Services Provided**

CLASSES OF INFORMATION

7.1 Corporate Management

Information on how the Council manages its business - the structure of the Council; its committee system; its business plans and policies; reports produced by or on behalf of the Council; and its equality scheme.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications	Availability *
<i>Management Structure</i>	Who's who in the management of the Council; the Clerk/ Chief Executive, Directors and other senior managers. Information on membership of other public bodies where senior officers represent the Council's interests.	Management Structure	Web Page
<i>Committee and Sub Committee Structure</i>	The committees and sub committees of the Council; membership (elected members, lay members and officials); their roles and responsibilities.	Committee Structure	Web Page
<i>Corporate Plan</i>	The coming year's business objectives and targets for the main services provided by the Council; also its longer term vision and strategic plan.	Corporate Plan	Web Page Publication
<i>Events Planned for the Current Financial Year</i>	Events and promotions planned, organised or funded within the Council area during the current financial year, including contact details.	"Whats On"	Web Page Publication
<i>Equality Scheme</i>	How the Council will fulfil its duty under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act by putting equality and good relations at the heart of policy decisions.	Equality Scheme	Web Page Publication
<i>Economic Development Strategy</i>	The Council's economic development strategy for the Council area including information on partnerships with other major stakeholders.	Economic Development Strategy	Web Page Publication
<i>Cultural Development Strategy</i>	The Council's arts and cultural development strategy for the Council area including information on partnerships with other major stakeholders.	Cultural Development Strategy	Web Page Publication
<i>Tourism Development</i>	The Council's tourism development strategy for the Council area including	Tourism Development Strategy	Web Page Publication

<i>Strategy</i>	information on partnerships with other major stakeholders.		
<i>Community Development Strategy</i>	The Council's community development strategy for the Council area including information on partnerships with other major stakeholders.	Community Development Strategy	Web Page Publication
<i>Waste Management Strategy</i>	The Council's waste management strategy for the Council area including information on partnerships with other major stakeholders.	Waste Management Strategy	Web Page Publication
<i>Annual Report</i>	The Annual Report includes the Annual Accounts and details progress against objectives and targets throughout the past year	Annual Report	Web Page Publication
<i>Council Policies & Procedures (inc Standing Orders)</i>	The Council's policies, procedures and Standing Orders which apply to committees, sub committees, Council officials, their agents and subcontractors, and elected members. These documents define the way the Council carries on its affairs.	Standing Orders	Web Page Publication
<i>Council Minutes and Agendas</i>	A comprehensive record of Council proceedings. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include information provided in confidence).</i>	Council and Committee Minutes and Agendas	Web Page Publication
<i>Reports & Investigations Commissioned by Council</i>	Each year the Council commissions various studies and investigations for the benefit of its citizens. These are the published reports produced as a result.	Reports	Web Page Publication
<i>Complaints Policy & Procedures</i>	Information on how to make a complaint on any aspect of the Council's services or facilities.	Sample document	Web Page
<i>Charging Structure for Published Information</i>	Charges, if any, for information supplied by the Council.	Charging Structure	Web Page Document

7.2 Elected Members

Information on the Councillors; the Code of Conduct they operate within; and payments due to them for various activities.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications	Availability *
<i>Information on Members</i>	Information on elected members including membership of committees and sub committees. Information on membership of other public bodies or representation of the Council on such bodies. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Members Information Sheet	Web Page
<i>Code of Conduct for Councillors</i>	The Code of Conduct which Councillors operate within. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include information protected under legal professional privilege).</i>	Code of Conduct for Councillors	Web Page Publication
<i>Rates and Allowances</i>	Rates and allowances payable to Councillors while undertaking Council business. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Published and Agreed Rates for Attendance and Mileage allowances	Web Page Publication
<i>Attendance Records</i>	Records of Councillor attendance at Council meetings, including committee and sub committee meetings. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Attendance Records	Web Page Publication

<i>Election Results and Expenses</i>	Records of Councillors' expenses from the most recent local government election. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Election results by District Electoral Area	Web Page Publication
<i>Official Visits & Civic Functions</i>	Records of official and courtesy visits and civic functions within the current financial year and preceding financial year including attendees and costs incurred. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Official Visits to the District and Outside the District	Web Page

7.3 Personnel & Recruitment

Information on how Council staff are recruited; their roles and responsibilities; rates of pay and expected standards of behaviour.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications	Availability *
<i>Code of Conduct for Staff</i>	Information on the conduct which is expected of staff in the performance of their duties. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Code of Conduct for Staff	Web Page Publication
<i>Job Roles</i>	Documents detailing the duties and responsibilities required of each job role within the Council.	Job Roles for all Staff	Web Page
<i>Pay and Grading Structure</i>	The pay structure for grades of staff within the Council.	Council Pay and Grading Structure	Web Page
<i>Job Vacancies</i>	Current job vacancies and jobs advertised within the past year.	Current Job Vacancies within the Council	Web Page Job Application
<i>Statutory Returns</i>	Annual reports on the composition of staff by grade, gender, etc in accordance with current legislation.	Annual Statutory Returns (Summarised)	Web Page

7.4 Financial Performance

Financial data showing the Council's income and expenditure.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications	Availability *
<i>Summary Accounts</i>	Summary financial data by service line and corporate overheads. The audited accounts, including the auditor's report, for the past two years.	Summary Financial Accounts	Web Page
<i>Annual Budgets</i>	Planned income and expenditure by service line and corporate overheads for the current financial year.	Budget For Current Financial Year	Web Page Budget Book
<i>District and Regional Rates</i>	The rates applicable to businesses and householders in the current financial year.	District and Regional rates	Web Page

7.5 Procurement Practices

Information on how the Council procures products and services from suppliers.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications	Availability *
<i>Tendering Procedures</i>	Procedures and guidelines used in the tendering process for Council products and services.	Procurement Policy	Web Page Document
<i>Tender Reports</i>	Tendering activity over the current financial year and preceding financial year. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include information provided in confidence or covered by commercial interest and trade secrets).</i>	Tender Reports on Significant Tenders Awarded	Web Page Documents

7.6 Licensing & Approvals

Information on how the Council grants licences for various trading activities within the Council area; standards and procedures for building control approvals and environmental health issues.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications	Availability *
<i>Entertainment and Trading Licences</i>	Procedures regarding the granting of licences for entertainment; amusement; street trading; and petroleum retailing. Also allocation of market stalls. How to apply for such licences or permits.	Licensing Procedures and Policies	Web Page Procedure Documentation and Application Forms
<i>Procedure Documentation</i>	Standards and procedures regarding building control approval and how to go about applying.	Building Control Application Procedures	Web Page Application Forms
<i>Building Control Approvals</i>	Current Building Control applications and approvals granted within the last 3 years.	Summarised Building Control Applications	Web Page
<i>Building Control Inspections</i>	Annual departmental performance report in relation to building control applications received, as measured against departmental plan.	Building Control Annual Report	Web Page Report
<i>Environmental Health</i>	Standards and procedures for the public and businesses and guidelines on environmental health matters. Council's enforcement policy in relation to breaches of legislation.	Environmental Health Standards and Procedures	Web Page Application Reporting Forms
<i>Environmental Health Inspections</i>	Annual performance report on Environmental Health activity as measured against targets contained within Departmental Action Plan. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include information likely to prejudice law enforcement).</i>	Environmental Health Annual Report	Web Page Report
<i>Dog Licensing</i>	Procedure for applying for a dog licence and fees involved.	Procedures for Dog Licensing	Web Page Application
<i>Council Bye Laws</i>	Bye laws made by the Council.	Details of Bye Laws Web page Publication Number	Web Page Documents

7.7 Services Provided

Information on the range of services and facilities available from the Council. (NB Councils should refer to their published Equality Schemes to ensure that all services listed therein are covered in their FOI Publication Scheme. The information classes below are representative for many councils).

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications	Availability *
<i>Council Offices</i>	Information on Council offices, addresses, opening hours, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Council Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet
<i>Arts & Cultural Facilities</i>	Information on arts and cultural facilities within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Arts and Cultural Facilities	Web Page
<i>Tourism</i>	Information on tourist facilities and services within the Council area including (where applicable) addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Tourism Facilities	Web Page
<i>Leisure Facilities & Services</i>	Information on leisure facilities within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Leisure Facilities	Web Page
<i>Sports Development</i>	Information on Sports Development including summer schemes, grants available and sports provision	Sports Development Facilities	Web Page Policy Document
<i>Economic Development</i>	Information on Economic Development support including contacts and funding opportunities	Economic Development Strategy	Web Page
<i>Community Centres & Services</i>	Information on community centres and outreach facilities and services within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Community Centres and Community services	Web Page
<i>Travelling People</i>	Information on the Council's policies towards Travelling People, the facilities available and contact details.	Policy on Travellers	Web Page Policy Document
<i>Access to Countryside</i>	Information on the Council's approach to resolving 'rights of way' disputes including contact details	Access to Countryside Policy	Web page Policy Document

<i>Parks and Grounds</i>	Information on parks and grounds within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, telephone numbers and other contact details.	Parks and Grounds Information	Web Page
<i>Markets</i>	Information on markets within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, 'Customers Charter', main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Markets and Fairs	Web Page
<i>Registration of Births, Deaths & Marriages</i>	Information on offices, addresses, opening hours, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Registration of Births Deaths and Marriages Procedures	Web Page
<i>Street Naming, Postal Numbering and Property Certificates</i>	Information on Street Naming, Postal Numbering and Property Certificates, including addresses, telephone numbers and other contact details.	Policy on Street Naming and Numbering	Web Page Policy Document
<i>Building Control</i>	Information on the full range of functions carried out by Building Control including Dangerous Buildings and Structures.	Building Control Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet
<i>Environmental Health</i>	Information on the full range of functions carried out by the Department under the core function headings of Food Safety, Health and Safety at Work, Consumer Protection, Pollution and Noise Control, Licensing and Regulatory and General Environmental Health matters.	Environmental Health Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet
<i>Refuse Collection, Waste Disposal & Recycling (Domestic & Trade)</i>	Information on refuse collection routes & timetables, 'bulky' collection services, landfill sites, skip sites, depots including (where appropriate) addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details. Details of the Council's recycling policy and facilities. Supply of refuse containers and 'wheelie bins'.	Refuse Collection and Disposal information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet
<i>Street Cleansing & Litter Control</i>	Information on street cleansing and litter control services including street cleaning rotas and contact details.	Street Cleansing and litter collection Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet
<i>Public Conveniences</i>	Locations, charges (if any), cleaning schedules, and contact details for further queries.	Public Conveniences Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet
<i>Bus Shelters</i>	Locations and contact details for further queries.	Bus Shelters Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet

<i>Cemetery & Cremation Services</i>	Information on cemetery and cremation services and facilities within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, charging mechanisms, telephone numbers and other contact details. Also information on cemetery maintenance.	Cemeteries Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet
<i>Dog Warden Service</i>	Information on how the Council deals with stray dogs, the enforcement of dog fouling laws and investigations into dog attacks on other animals and people. Also charging mechanisms, telephone numbers and other contact details.	Dog warden Service Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet
<i>Harbour Facilities</i>	Information on harbour facilities within the Council area, including charging mechanisms, addresses, and contact details.	Harbours Information Sheet	Web Page Information Sheet