



PORTLAND TOWN COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

Policy Number	Version	Owner	Date Adopted	Review Date
018	Freedom of Information Policy 24-04-23	Council	Full Council 19-05-2023	May 2026
	Review		Full Council 15-05-2024	May 2026
			June 2026	June 2028

Portland Town Council is committed to complying with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and to publishing or making available information held by it in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as set below.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The Act) provides the public with a general legal entitlement to view all recorded information held by the Town Council subject to certain exemptions. The public will have rights to view:

- All the information in the Council's Publications Scheme
- To request all recorded information held by the Council, regardless of when it was created, by whom, or the form in which it is now held.

AIMS AND SCOPE OF THIS POLICY

Portland Town Council aims to show that it is an 'open' and 'transparent' organisation committed to delivering the best possible public services.

The implementation and enforcement of this policy is intended to protect Officers, Councillors and members of the public.

This policy applies to all recorded information held by the Town Council that is information created, received and maintained by Members and Officers in the course of their work. It is intended to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibility under the Freedom of Information Act.

All staff and Council Members have a responsibility to ensure that the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 are not breached by the release of any information held by the Council.

Dealing with Requests

Portland Town Council is committed to dealing with requests within the statutory timescales of no more than 20 working days. This can be extended in specific circumstances on legal advice. However, the Council is committed to providing a prompt service.

The Town Council will claim exemptions as appropriate whilst maintaining a commitment to openness, scrutiny and the public interest and will inform the FOI applicant when exemptions have been applied. Where appropriate, requests in writing will be treated as FOI requests.

Making a Freedom of Information Request

If you wish to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act, then your request should:-

- Be in writing (using the contact details below)
- Contain your name and address
- Contain sufficient information to allow us to locate the information you request
- Be legible

Once a request is received, the Town Council has 20 working days to:-

- Confirm whether we hold the information requested
- Advise whether you need to pay a fee for the information in line with the FOI Fees

Regulations

- Advise who holds the information if we do not have it (if the information requested is held by another public authority, then your request may be transferred to the correct body with your agreement)

Portland Town Council maintains a Publications Scheme that provides details of information available to the public as part of the Council's normal business activities. The Publications Scheme can be viewed on the Town Council's website (or a copy can be obtained by contacting the Town Clerk using the details set out below).

All FOI requests and responses will be recorded by the Town Council and will be handled in accordance with The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

There are a number of exemptions to The Freedom of Information Act 2000 in law. The Town Council may need to consider whether the information requested should be released or whether it is exempt. If the information requested is exempt, then the Council has the right to refuse the request and, under these circumstances, will communicate the reasons for refusal.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Town Council has a responsibility to make its recorded information available in accordance with the Act.

All Staff and Members

- Must ensure that all such data is handled properly and confidentially at all times, irrespective of whether it is held on paper or by electronic means.
- Should familiarise themselves with this policy and the Freedom of Information Act guidance which is available on the web.
- Comply with all the conditions set out within the Act.
- Ensure that General Data Protection Regulations are not breached.

The Town Clerk

- is responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of the Freedom of Information Act and that they adhere to the guidelines within
- has a responsibility to ensure that data subjects have appropriate access, upon written request, to details regarding personal information relating to them.
- is responsible for gathering and disseminating information and issues relating to information security, the General Data Protection Regulations and other related legislation.
- is responsible for ensuring that any request for information is dealt with under the Act and in compliance with this policy. The Town Clerk is also responsible for good information handling practices and implementing records management policies and procedures.

To make a request, please apply either by email to office@portlandtowncouncil.gov.uk or by post to Portland Town Council, Portland Community Venue, Three Yards Close, Portland, Dorset, DT5 1JN.

Applicants who are not satisfied with the information provided have the right to complain to the Town Council. If the issue is still not resolved satisfactorily, then they can take their complaint to the Information Commissioner – www.ico.org.uk