

GUIDE TO INFORMATION

The Freedom of Information Act gives a general right of access to recorded information held by the Council. It also lists a number of exemptions from that right and places some obligations on the Council. South Hams District Council is committed to making its actions, decisions and services as clear to people as possible. It seeks to do this in part by publishing routinely as much information as possible in order that the public can understand the actions the Council is taking and the services it delivers. The Council has taken into account the type of information most frequently requested since the Act came fully into force in 2005.

What is the Publication Scheme?

South Hams District Council has produced a Publication Scheme which lists the classes of information that the Council makes publicly available. This includes information published in paper form and information available on the Council's website. The Scheme indicates which information is only available in hard copy and will also specify the exceptional circumstances when information is only available to view in person. Every effort will be made to ensure that such information is available at a convenient time to any person wishing to see it.

The Publication Scheme is also available in reception at the Council Offices, Follaton House

The Council has adopted the Model Publication Scheme issued by the Information Commissioner which contains seven 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**
- **Services we offer**

How do I request information not covered in the Scheme?

If you cannot find the information you are looking for in the Publication Scheme you can make a request for the information by e mailing or writing to the Council. You can request any information which was created before the Act came into force in 2005.

The Council will seek to deal with any such requests within twenty working days and in doing so will advise you whether it holds the information requested and provide you with that information. Where we are unable to

provide information we will explain the reasons for this decision clearly and by reference to the exemptions contained within the Freedom of Information Act.

Will I be charged for the 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 include the cost of:

- Photocopying
- Printing
- Postage and packaging
- The costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

The Council may at a future date produce a schedule of fees which it will make readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to the provision of the information.

Advice and assistance

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

Customer Services – customer.services@southhams.gov.uk or call 01803 861234

Reviewing and maintaining the Scheme

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the Council to review from time to time its Publication Scheme. The Council will review its Scheme annually and material will be updated and any outdated information will be removed. Where it is shown that the Council is regularly publishing material as a direct result of requests for that information, the information will then be included as a matter of course in the Council's Publication Scheme. The Council will also review this Guide as part of the process.

Copyright

Reproducing material supplied under the Publication Scheme without the express permission of the Council may mean an infringement of copyright. Request for permission should be addressed to the Freedom of Information Officer at Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5NE

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 Monitoring Officer.

If after going through the Council's formal complaints 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 Officer, FOI / EIR (Complaints Resolution), Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 4AF (www.ico.gov.uk)

If you have any suggestions or compliments we need to know so that we can improve our service to you. Feedback forms are available by contacting the Freedom of Information Officer at Follaton House, Plymouth Road, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5NE