

# **Epping Forest District Council**

**Freedom of Information Act 2000**

**Model Publication Scheme and  
Guide to Information**

**March 2009**

*Epping Forest District Council*  
[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

# Epping Forest District Council

## Freedom of Information Act 2000

### Model publication scheme

This model publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It may be adopted without modification by any public authority without further approval and will be valid until further notice. This publication scheme commits an authority to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information covered is included in the classes of information mentioned below, where this information is held by the authority. Additional assistance is provided to the definition of these classes in sector specific guidance manuals issued by the Information Commissioner. The scheme commits an authority:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by the authority and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information the authority makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

#### Classes of information

**Who we are and what we do.**

Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

**What we spend and how we spend it.**

Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.

**What our priorities are and how we are doing.**

Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

**How we make decisions.**

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

**Our policies and procedures.**

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

**Lists and registers.**

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority.

**The services we offer.**

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information will not generally include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

**The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available**

The authority will indicate clearly to the public what information is covered by this scheme and how it can be obtained.

Where it is within the capability of a public authority, information will be provided on a website. Where it is impracticable to make information available on a website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, a public authority will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means. In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where an authority is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

**Charges which may be made for information published under this scheme**

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by the authority for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by public authorities, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is 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 provision of the information.

## **Written requests**

Information held by a public authority that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - PUBLICATION SCHEME**

#### **GUIDE TO INFORMATION**

##### **Introduction**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides a right of access to recorded information held by public authorities other than personal information (which is managed under the Data Protection Act 1998).

The Publication Scheme is a legal requirement under the Freedom of Information Act. It commits the Council to make information easily available to the public without the need for individuals to make a specific request.

The scheme commits the Council:

- (a) to publish proactively or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by the Council and falls within the classifications below;
- (b) to specify the information which is held by the Council and falls within the classifications below;
- (c) to publish proactively or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme;
- (d) to produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public;
- (e) to review and update on a regular basis the information the Council makes available under this scheme;
- (f) to produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made available proactively;
- (g) to make the publication scheme available to the public.

The publication scheme is not the route for enquiries about individual cases, claims or appeals. The Directorate dealing with the issue is the point of contact.

Many of the publications referred to in the publication scheme are available via the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk). They are also available in hard copy and details of how to obtain copies are provided within each class. Most publications are free unless otherwise indicated.

There are circumstances under which the Council is not required to make information routinely available. These are when:

- (a) the information is not held;

- (b) the information is exempt from disclosure;
- (c) the Council cannot easily access the information.

If you cannot find what you are looking for within the scheme, contact Ian Willett, Assistant to the Chief Executive (01992 564243) or Graham Lunnun, Assistant Director Democratic Services (01992 564244) for more information. Information not specifically mentioned in the scheme may still be available on request.

You have the right under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, subject to certain exemptions, to request information not covered in the scheme. Requests can be made by email to [ContactUs@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:ContactUs@eppingforestdc.gov.uk); by facsimile to 01992 564488; or by post to Freedom of Information Act Request, Office of the Chief Executive, Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ - a request form is available on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

Reference copies of the publication scheme are available for consultation at the Council's reception areas. The scheme is also available on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk). If you would like a printed copy of the scheme, contact Ian Willett, Assistant to the Chief Executive (01992 564243) or Graham Lunnun, Assistant Director Democratic Services (01992 564244).

### **Accessibility**

The scheme is available in large print, Braille or on audio cassette on request.

### **About the Council**

Epping Forest District stretches northwards from the urban areas of Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Loughton, and Waltham Abbey bordering Greater London through small market towns (eg. Epping and Ongar) and villages to predominantly agricultural areas.

The District has a population of approximately 123,000 and covers an area of 34,500 hectares (133 square miles).

Within the District is a large part of Epping Forest itself, one of the most significant surviving areas of ancient forest. The Forest is managed by the Corporation of London for the benefit of local people.

The Lee Valley Regional Park follows the western border of the District with Hertfordshire. The Park provides leisure and recreation activities and is a habitat rich in flora and wildlife.

Epping Forest District Council comprises 58 elected councillors representing 32 wards.

The Council is responsible for a variety of statutory and non-statutory services for local residents and visitors, including:-

- benefits administration
- council tax and business rates collection
- electoral registration
- emergency planning
- environmental health
- grounds maintenance and arboriculture
- housing

- land drainage
- leisure and culture
- local land charges
- museum
- parking
- planning
- recycling, waste management and street cleaning

The Council's services are provided by the following Directorates:-

Corporate Support Services  
 Environment and Street Scene  
 Finance and ICT  
 Housing  
 Planning and Economic Development

In addition the Chief Executive has a team of officers responsible for Democratic Services, Elections and Electoral Registration, Grants and Voluntary Sector Support and Internal Audit.

The Deputy Chief Executive has a team of officers responsible for Customer Services, Public Relations and Information, Community and Cultural Services, Marketing and Events.

The Council's offices are open to the public from 9.00 a.m. to 5.15 p.m. on Mondays to Thursdays and 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Fridays. The Council's main offices are Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ.

Community and Cultural Services and Marketing and Events Services are based in offices next to Epping Sports Centre in Hemnall Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4LU.

The Council also has information offices at Waltham Abbey Town Hall, Highbridge Street, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1DE and inside Loughton Library, Traps Hill, Loughton, Essex IG10 1HD.

Buckhurst Hill Parish Council provides information on District Council services from their offices at 62/64 Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5BY as does Ongar Library, The Pleasance, High Street, Ongar, Essex CM5 9AB.

The Council's Museum is situated at 39/41 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 1EL.

The Council's vision is to make the Epping Forest District a safe, healthy and attractive place in which to live. The Council has also resolved to ensure that it offers high quality, customer focused services, provided by skilled and committed staff.

### **Personal Information**

The Freedom of Information Act does not allow the Council to publish or make public any private or confidential information that the Council holds about individuals, Generally correspondence sent or received by the Council and all information relating to private individuals is excluded because it is classified as personal data and covered by the Data Protection Act. Individuals have a right to their personal information under the Data Protection Act. If you would like a copy of your personal information held by the Council you should contact the Council's Data Protection Officer at Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, Essex CM16 4BZ. There is a charge of £10 for a Data Protection subject request.

## **Information Updates**

The information held within each class will be updated and published as information changes.

## **Classes of Information**

### **(a) The Council and Democracy**

This class covers -

**(i) The Council's Constitution** including details of the Council and the Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and individuals to which various powers and functions have been delegated; terms of reference of the various Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels; meeting procedure rules; financial regulations; contract standing orders; codes of conduct for members and officers; member and officer protocols; the local code of Corporate Governance; the District Council and Local Council Charter; the members' allowance scheme; member role accountability statements; the management structure of the Council's workforce.

*Information is available for inspection at Democratic Services Office of the Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

### **(ii) Currently elected Councillors' information and contact details**

*Information is available in print from the Council's Information Desk at the Civic Offices, Epping; from the Council's Information Offices at Loughton Library and Town Hall Waltham Abbey; from Buckhurst Hill Parish Council Offices and from Ongar Library. Information is also available on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

### **(iii) How to complain about member conduct.**

*Information is available in print from the Democratic Services Office of the Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

### **(iv) A-Z contact details for all customer-facing services.**

*Information is available in print from the Council's Information Desk at the Civic Offices, Epping; from the Council's Information Offices at Loughton Library and Town Hall, Waltham Abbey; from Buckhurst Hill Parish Council Offices and from Ongar Library. Information is also available on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(v) Relationships with other authorities**, the Council works closely with other public authorities who provide services throughout the District, including Essex County Council, Town and Parish Councils, the Emergency Services, Health Services, the Youth Council, links to the following are available on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

Births, Deaths, Marriages and Civil Partnerships  
Provision and Management of Cemeteries  
Citizens' Advice Bureaux  
Crime Reduction  
Education and Careers  
Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership  
Epping Forest Youth Council

Essex Online Partnership  
Magistrates' Courts  
Transport  
West Essex PCT

**(b) What we spend and how we spend it**

This class covers –

**(i) Asset Management Plan**

*Information is available in print from the Corporate Support Services Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping*

**(ii) Audit of Accounts – Annual Governance Reports (for recent years)**

**(iii) Audit and Governance Committee Report 2007/08**

*Information is available for inspection at Internal Audit Office of the Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(iv) Budgets and Council Tax Declarations (for recent years)**

**(v) Capital Strategy including Capital Programme (for recent years)**

*Information is available for inspection at Finance Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(vi) Contracts exceeding £50,000 currently being tendered**

**(vii) Contracts exceeding £50,000 awarded in recent years and their value**

*Information is available in print from the appropriate Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping*

**(viii) Corporate Procurement Strategy**

**(ix) E Procurement Strategy**

*Information is available for inspection at Finance Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(x) Elections expenses (for recent elections)**

*Information is available for inspection at Democratic Services Office of the Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping*

**(xi) External and Internal Audit Reports for recent years**

**(xii) Grant Claims Audit (for recent years)**

**(xiii) Internal Audit Quarterly Monitoring Reports (for recent years)**

*Information is available for inspection at Internal Audit Office of the Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(xiv) Investment Reports – 2008**

*Information is available for inspection at Finance Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(xv) Medium Term Strategy outlining finances and priorities for the next four years (for recent years)**

*Information is available for inspection at Finance Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(xvi) Members' Allowances Paid – totals by reference to categories (for recent years)**

*Information is available for inspection at Democratic Services Office of the Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and is produced once a year in The Forester (the Council's magazine delivered to all properties in the District).*

**(xvii) Provisional Revenue Outturn Reports (for recent years)**

**(xiii) Provisional Capital Outturn Reports (for recent years)**

**(xiv) Prudential Indicators Outturn and Treasury Management Stewardship Report (for recent years)**

*Information is available for inspection at Finance Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(xv) Springfields, Waltham Abbey Improvement Scheme – Progress Reports including anticipated outturn against budget**

*Information is available for inspection at Housing Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(xvi) Staff Pay and Grading Structure**

**(xvii) Staff Allowances and expenses for attending evening meetings, travel, subsistence and accommodation**

*Information is available in print from the Human Resources Office of the Corporate Support Services Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping*

**(xviii) Statutory Statement of Accounts (for recent years)**

**(xix) Systems and Accounts Audit Memorandum – Returns and Declarations**

**(xx) Use of Resources Assessment and Auditor Judgements (for recent years)**

*Information is available for inspection at Finance Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(c) What our priorities are and how we are doing**

This class covers –

**(i) Best Value Performance Plans (for recent years)**

*Information is available for inspection at the Office of the Deputy Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(ii) Business Plans for Directorates (for recent years)**

*Information is available in print from the appropriate Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping*

**(iii) Complaints** – data on % of Step 3 complaints determined within the target of 10 working days, and the % of Ombudsman enquiries responded to within his target of 28 working days

Information is available for inspection at the Office of the Deputy Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

**(iv) Comprehensive Performance Assessment – June 2004**

Information is available for inspection on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

**(v) Countrycare Annual Reports (for recent years)**

Information is available for inspection at Planning and Economic Development Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

**(vi) E-Annual reports (for recent years)** including Report of the Cabinet, Report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Report of Standards Committee, Report of Audit and Governance Committee, Report of Remuneration Panel.

Information is available for inspection on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

**(vii) Epping Forest District Adopted Local Plan 1998 and Alterations 2006**

Information is available for inspection at Planning and Economic Development Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

**(viii) Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, Private Sector Housing Strategy, Housing Service Standards Leaflet and Tenants Charter, Tenant Satisfaction Survey Report**

Information is available in print from the Housing Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping

**(d) How we make decisions**

This class covers –

- (i) Agenda, reports, background papers for forthcoming meetings of Council, Committee, Sub-Committee, Panel meetings**
- (ii) Agenda, reports for past meetings of Council, Committee, Sub-Committee, Panel meetings held since 1991**
- (iii) Ask the Cabinet – Public Questions at Council meetings**
- (iv) Calendar of forthcoming Council, Committee, Sub-Committee and Panel meetings**
- (v) Executive Work Programme incorporating the Forward Plan**
- (vi) More Questions than Answers – Public Questions at Council meetings**
- (vii) Webcasts of meetings from the last few months**
- (viii) Your Voice Your Choice – Guide to Planning Committees and Public Participation**

Information is available for inspection at Democratic Services Office of the Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk) - no material will be made available which is exempt within the categories specified in the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000).

**(vix) Current public consultation exercises, results and outcomes of consultation exercises**

*Information is available for inspection at the Office of the Deputy Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(e) Our policies and procedures**

This class covers –

- (i) Current jobs advertised**
- (ii) Candidate Recruitment Pack for currently available jobs**
- (iii) HR Policies and Guidelines**

*Information is available in print from the Human Resources Office of the Corporate Support Services Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping*

**(iv) Compliments and Complaints Booklet and Form.**

*Information is available for inspection at Office of the Deputy Chief Executive at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(v) Lists of Fees and Charges for Council Services**

*Information is available for inspection at the appropriate Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(vi) Housing Allocations Scheme, Grants Policy (Private Sector Housing), Tenancy Agreement, Leaseholder Agreement**

*Information is available in print from the Housing Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping*

**(f) Lists and Registers**

This class covers -

- (i) Assets Register**
- (ii) List of Buildings and Other Structures of Local Architectural or Historic Interest**
- (iii) Lists and Maps of Conservation Areas**
- (iv) Public Licensing Register**
- (v) Register of Councillors' Financial and Other Interests including Gifts or Hospitality**
- (vi) Register of Planning Applications**
- (vii) The Forester – Residents' Magazine**
- (viii) Weekly List of Planning Applications Registered**
- (vix) Tenants Handbook and other Housing information publications**

*Information is available for inspection at the appropriate Directorate at the Civic Offices, Epping and on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)*

**(g) Services provided by the Council**

This class covers -

- (i) A-Z list of services provided and links to details of these services**

Information is available on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

**(h) Election Information**

This class covers -

- (i) Recent District Council and local Council election results and UK Parliamentary European Parliament and County Council elections conducted in the District**
- (ii) Review of polling districts, places and stations**
- (iii) Information on becoming a candidate**
- (iv) Forthcoming elections and lists of candidates**
- (v) Voting procedures**
- (vi) Current electoral register and street index to the register**
- (vii) Electoral boundaries and information about periodic electoral review when there are changes to wards or electoral arrangements**

*Information is available on the Council's website [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk) except for the electoral register and street index to the register which are available for inspection at the Council's Information Desk at the Civic Offices, Epping and at the Information Offices inside Loughton Library and at Town Hall, Waltham Abbey.*