# RIPON CITY COUNCIL

## Freedom of Information Policy

| Item | Detail |
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| **Adopted by Full Council** | 9th November 2026 |
| **Previous version** | |
| **Current update** | 2nd November 2026 |
| **Date of review** | November 2029 |

**1. Policy Statement**

Ripon City Council is committed to openness, transparency and accountability. The Council recognises the public's legal right to access information held by public authorities and will comply with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) and associated guidance issued by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The Council will:

- Make information readily available through publication wherever possible.
- Respond to requests for information promptly and within statutory timescales.
- Provide assistance to applicants where reasonable.
- Balance openness with the need to protect personal and confidential information.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All recorded information held by Ripon City Council.
- Information held electronically, in paper form, audio recordings, photographs and other formats.
- Information held on behalf of the Council by third parties.

The policy applies to all councillors, employees and contractors acting on behalf of the Council.

## 3. Publication Scheme

The Council has adopted the Information Commissioner's Model Publication Scheme.

The Council will proactively publish information including:

- Council policies and procedures.
- Financial information and annual accounts.
- Minutes, agendas and reports.
- Asset and property information.
- Councillor information.
- Service information and public notices.

Published information will be made available through the Council website wherever practicable.

## 4. Making a Request

Requests for information should:

- Be made in writing, including by email.
- Include the applicant's name and correspondence address.
- Clearly describe the information requested.

Requests should be sent to:

**Chief Officer to Ripon City Council**
Ripon Town Hall
Market Place
Ripon
HG4 1DD

Email: admin@riponcity.gov.uk

Applicants do not need to mention the Freedom of Information Act for a request to be valid.

**5. Responding to Requests**

The Council will:

- Acknowledge requests as soon as practicable.
- Respond within 20 working days as required by law.
- Confirm whether information is held.
- Provide requested information unless an exemption applies.
- Explain any reasons for withholding information.

Where clarification is required, the statutory timescale may be paused until clarification is received.

**6. Exempt Information**

The Council may withhold information where an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act or Environmental Information Regulations applies.

Examples include:

- Personal information protected by Data Protection legislation.
- Information provided in confidence.
- Commercially sensitive information.
- Information subject to legal privilege.
- Information intended for future publication.

Each request will be considered on its own merits and the public interest test will be applied where required.

**7. Charges**

Information will normally be provided free of charge.

The Council may levy charges where permitted by legislation, including:

- Photocopying.
- Printing.

- Postage and packaging.
- Requests that exceed statutory cost limits.

Applicants will be advised of any charges in advance.

**8. Environmental Information**

Requests relating to environmental matters will be considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 where appropriate.

Examples include information concerning:

- Land and buildings.
- Trees and green spaces.
- Pollution or environmental impacts.
- Waste management.
- Energy use and sustainability projects.

**9. Information Not Held**

Where information is not held, the Council will inform the applicant accordingly.

Where possible, the Council may direct the applicant to another authority likely to hold the information.

**10. Complaints and Internal Review**

Any applicant dissatisfied with the Council's response may request an internal review.

A request for review should normally be made within 40 working days of the Council's decision.

The internal review will be conducted by a person not involved in the original decision where possible, and a response will normally be provided within 20 working days.

**11. Information Commissioner's Office**

If an applicant remains dissatisfied following an internal review, they may complain to:

**Information Commissioner's Office**
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Website: https://www.ico.org.uk

**12. Responsibilities**

The Town Clerk has overall responsibility for the administration of Freedom of Information requests.

Councillors and staff are responsible for:

- Maintaining accurate records.
- Assisting with information requests where required.
- Ensuring information is managed in accordance with Council policies.

**13. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, guidance or Council procedures.