Freedom of Information Policy

The Town Council adopted this Model Publication Scheme with effect from May 2018. This scheme will enable members of the public to view and access information held by the Town Council.

Obtaining Information and Information held

There are three ways to obtain the information:

- Town Council web site

The web site holds the type of information which the Council routinely publishes e.g. minutes and agendas. The information you want may already be included in the publication scheme – so please check the documents on the web site first.

- Inspect Documents held by Council Administration Staff

If you wish to view certain documents, you should contact the Administration Staff, either via the facility on the web site or by telephone, or in writing. Some documents require time to locate, so it may be necessary to make an appointment. Please note hours of public availability are Monday to Friday, from10.30am to Midday & 1.30pm to 3.00pm

- Individual Written Request

If the information is not included in the publication scheme or on the web site, you may send a written request to The Town Clerk, Amble Town Council, Fourways 2, 6 Dilston Terrace, Amble NE65 0DT

Your request must include your name, address for correspondence, and a description of the information you require.

Council's Response to a Written Request

Within 20 working days of receipt of your written request the Council will:

- confirm to you whether or not it holds the information
- advise you if a fee will be charged
- provide you with the information (after any relevant fee has been paid) unless an exemption applies (see 'Exemptions' paragraph below).

Fees

The Act only allows the Council to charge for answering Freedom of Information requests in the following circumstances:

- Disbursement costs such as printing, photocopying and postage; and when estimated staff costs involved in locating and or compiling the information exceed £450. Under these circumstances, the Council can refuse the request on the grounds of cost, or charge the applicant £30 per hour, plus disbursements for the estimated work.

For the majority of requests, or a series of requests from the same applicant within a 12 month period, it is expected that the charge for locating and compiling information will be less than £450 and therefore, except for disbursement costs, no reimbursement can be sought.

Fees continued

However, where costs are estimated to exceed £450 (based on an hourly charge-out rate of £30), the Council can decide to:

- refuse the request; or
- comply with the request and charge for allowable costs as prescribed in the regulations; or
- comply with the request free of charge.

If the estimated cost of a request is more than £450, and it is decided to release the information and make a charge for the information then:

- A fee notice will be sent to the applicant requesting the appropriate fee.
- The request will not be answered until the fee has been received.
- If the actual cost of completing the request is more than the estimate then the Council will incur the additional cost.
- Where the cost is less than the estimated cost then the difference will be refunded to the applicant.

For disbursements costs, it is proposed that the Council will charge 10p per sheet for photocopying and printing documents, and recover the actual cost of postage or any other transmission costs from the applicant.

Exemptions

Some information may not be provided by the Council as there are 23 exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act, for example, personal data about individuals which is protected by the Data Protection Act 1998, or commercially confidential information.

Further Help

If you need help in accessing information from the Council under the Freedom of Information Act, please contact the Town Clerk (address as before).

You will also find more detailed guidance on the website of the Information Commissioner.

Complaints

If you are dissatisfied with the response from the Council then you should put your complaint in writing to the Clerk at the address above. If you are still dissatisfied, you may contact the Information Commissioner at:

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

Date:	**May 2023**	**Approving:**	**Full Council**
Policy effective:	**Immediate**	**Date for next review:**	**May 2025**