

Binfield Parish Council

Policy Statement on Access to Information



1. Introduction

Binfield Parish Council supports the statutory framework for responding to requests for information under access to information legislation including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, and the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A. Under this legislation there is a requirement to ensure that a level of openness is maintained and enhanced to promote transparent, open and accountable Local Government.

2. Aims

The aims of the policy are to assist the Clerk and Councillors to meet the presumption in favour of disclosure of information required by the legislation, and thereby to promote greater openness, provide increased transparency of decision making and to build public trust and confidence.

These aims will be balanced against the need to ensure the confidentiality of some information relating to such areas as personal privacy, commercial sensitivity, security issues, and where disclosure would not be in the public interest.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all requests for information made to Binfield Parish Council whether written or verbal. It aims to ensure that requests are managed in accordance with professional principles, and within the timescales required by specified legislation.

4. Policy Statement

Binfield Parish Council is committed to a framework for access to information which ensures that:

- 4.1 All requests for information shall be dealt with promptly, and within the statutory timescales.
- 4.2 Requests will be assessed to ensure that: the confidentiality of personal or commercially sensitive data is not breached; disclosure is in the public interest and provision of the information would not be prejudicial to the Parish Council or its partners.
- 4.3 Information shall only be withheld if a legitimate exemption applies and that in such a case the application of the exemption will be explained to the enquirer.
- 4.4 Any enquirer shall be kept informed of the progress of their request and of any delays to which it may be subject.
- 4.5 All enquirers shall be advised of their right to take any complaint to the Information Commissioner, if they are dissatisfied with the service received or the information provided.
- 4.6 The majority of information which can be made publicly available shall be published to the Parish Council website.
- 4.7 All requests shall be monitored to demonstrate compliance with the legislation.

5. Monitor and Review

This policy shall be the responsibility of the Parish Council and shall be reviewed regularly. In particular, this will confirm that:

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- 5.1 The scope and content of the policy is still appropriate in the light of legal requirements and the Parish Council's practical experience.
- 5.2 The Clerk and Councillors are aware of their responsibilities, and requests for information are being answered within the statutory timescales applicable under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.