



Freedom of Information

Responsibility: F & GP committee

Review Cycle: Annually, or earlier in the event of legislative changes

<u>Date of Adoption / Renewal</u>	<u>Resolution Number</u>
3 July 2018	8463
27 October 2020	9152
7 September 2021	9498
30 th August 2022	9854
20 th June 2023	10158

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

1. Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities. It does this in two ways:

- 1.1 Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities
- 1.2 Members of the public are entitled to request information from public authorities

The Act covers any recorded information that is held by the Council. Recorded information includes printed documents, computer files, letters, emails, photographs, and sound or video recordings.

The Act does not give people access to their own personal data (information about themselves). Individuals wishing to see information about themselves need to make a Subject Access Request under the Data Protection Act.

2. What can be requested?

- 2.1 The right to ask for information only relates to information held by the Council at the time the request is made.
- 2.2 A request under the Freedom of Information Act gives a right to 'information' rather than specific records or documents.
- 2.3 The Council publishes a wide range of information on its website and as per the Council's Publication Scheme. Before submitting a request for information, the Council would urge individuals to visit the Council's website or check the Council's Publication Scheme (available on the website) as the information required may already be published.

3. How to make a request

- 3.1 A request must be made in writing. As much information as possible must be given to enable the Council to identify and locate the information being requested.
- 3.2 Requests may be made to the Town Clerk, Crowborough Town Council, Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1DH or by email to Information.Request@crowboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk
- 3.3 Where an individual is not able to make a request in writing, perhaps as a result of illiteracy, disability or illness, they may ask another person or agency (such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau) to help them or make the request of their behalf.

4. Response

- 4.1 The request will be dealt with by the Town Clerk or in their absence, the Assistant Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will do so in accordance with this policy and the guidance set by the Information Commissioners Office for dealing with requests.
- 4.2 Response to requests for information will be made promptly and within 20 working days after the day of receipt. Subject Access Requests will be responded to within one calendar month. Where we are unable to adhere to these timelines, we will inform requesters of the reasons and will keep them updated.
- 4.3 The requester is entitled to say how they wish the information to be communicated to them. This may be by letter, email, in the form of a summary of the information or by inspection at the Council's

offices. Where an inspection of documents is required, this will be arranged with the Town Clerk for a mutually convenient date and time.

5. Charges

5.1 In certain circumstances the Council may charge a fee for any retrieval and provision of information. Full details of any charges will be notified to the requester by the Town Clerk before the request is processed.

5.2 The Council's Publication Scheme has full details of charges for the provision of hard copies of documents which is available on the Town Council's website.

6. Refusal of a Request

6.2 In certain circumstances the Council may refuse a request for information.

6.3 Vexatious and repeated requests and/or applications made with the aim of frustrating the operations of the Council may be refused.

6.4 The Council may also refuse to accede to a request for information where the information is considered to be exempted under the Freedom of Information Act. Information on exemptions can be found on the ICO website. <https://ico.org.uk>

Some parts of a request response may be redacted where the release would breach the Data Protection Act.

6.5 All requests will be considered on their merits and with the aim that information should be made available unless it is clearly not in public interest to do so.

6.6 A written explanation for any refusal of a request for information will always be given.

7. Recording requests

7.1 All requests under the Freedom of Information Act will be recorded on a central log.

Appeals

If you are not happy with the way your request has been handled or your review response you may appeal to:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545745
Fax: 01625 524510
website: <https://ico.org.uk>

Further information about your rights under the Freedom of Information Act is available from our website of the **Information Commissioner's Office**.