

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Publication Scheme for

Newry and Mourne District Council

1 Background

The Newry and Mourne District Council is a local government district council established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 to administer a range of social, economic, cultural and environmental services to the local community.

As a public authority the council is required under the Freedom of Information Act to adopt and maintain a Publication Scheme setting out the classes of information it holds, the manner in which it publishes/intends to publish the information and the charges it intends to make for the information.

As a public body Newry and Mourne District Council is committed to the highest standards of accountability and openness and this Publication Scheme is prepared to enable the council to fulfil its obligations under the legislation and to better inform the public of its communication and information systems. The information contained in the Scheme will be made available to individuals on request under the terms as detailed in the Scheme.

An individual's right to request information, which is not normally published by the Council, does not come into force until January 2005.

Overall responsibility for this publication scheme rests with the Assistant Director of Finance IT/Purchasing within Newry and Mourne District Council. Seamus Mc Givern, Assistant Director of Finance IT/Purchasing, maintains the publication scheme on a day-to-day basis.

2 Notes on Using the Scheme

This publication scheme sets out the information that Newry and Mourne District Council will publish, how and when it will do so, and whether this information will be available free of charge or on payment. The classes of information to be published are set out under clearly defined headings, which reflect the structure and operations of Newry and Mourne District Council.

Publication does not refer solely to printed material. Publication has been interpreted as broadly as possible to include electronic documents, information included on the website, minutes of meetings, reports and leaflets.

It is intended, as far as possible, to make material available on the Newry and Mourne District Council Website on an ongoing basis. All classes referred to below will be available on the Web Site by June 2003. The majority of information is already there. The web Site address is www.newryandmourne.gov.uk. The Web Site is fully indexed and searchable.

It is intended to publish this scheme on the above Web site and to make it available in other forms i.e. tape, Braille.

The above Web Site currently meets the basic Bobby requirements and the WAI priority 1 requirements. Newry and Mourne District Council will continue to improve access to its Web Site for people with disabilities.

3 Requesting Information

Where information is available on the website, a hypertext link will direct you to the correct page on the website. Where information is available by post, a request can be made in writing. Applicants should provide as much detail as possible to identify the information sought. Requests should be addressed to:

Seamus Mc Givern
Assistant Director Finance IT/Purchasing
Newry and Mourne District Council
O'Hagan House
Monaghan Row
Newry Co. Down
BT35 8DJ

4 Charging and Copyright Issues

The council has determined four categories for charging for information requested under this Scheme as follows:

1. **Free of charge.** This includes general facts and information on the services offered to the public as well as information published on the Council's website (for those without internet access, a single print-out of the specific website content can be requested). It also includes answering telephone queries, providing copies of free leaflets and inspection of reference materials at Council Offices. Single copies will be provided free of charge.
2. **Priced Publications.** Where the information required is available in a priced publication details of the publication, its cost and where to obtain it will be supplied.
3. **Photocopying costs and postage (plus a small administrative charge).** This covers information, which has already been prepared which the Council can photocopy or provide a computer printout. This includes copies of entries in public registers, copies of the Council's internal guidance documents and explanatory material on dealing with the public. Single copies of documents will be provided free of charge. Multiple copies will be charged at a price per copy. The current charge is 0.45p/copy.

In addition to the copy charge an administrative charge of £5.00 will be levied.

4. **Professional charges for locating and preparing information for release.** Where preparing or gathering the required material can only be done by specialists or other professionals at a charge to the Council, a written estimate will be given of the cost of providing such information. The cost will have to be paid in advance. The Council will then aim to provide the information within a target of 20 days.

No charges will be made where a request for information is refused. There will be no charge to appeal against a refusal to supply requested information. Nor will there be a charge to appeal against any charges made for requested information.

Newry and Mourne District Council owns the copyright to the information it produces. If information is to be re-used or reproduced, commercially or otherwise, written approval must be obtained from the office of the Chief Executive.

5 Exempt Information

In order to protect confidential or other information where its disclosure may prejudice the interests of others, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 sets out a series of exemptions.

The classes of information which the Council has specified in this scheme as being classes of information which it publishes or intends to publish may in some cases contain material which we consider to contain exempt information, as defined in Part II of the Act. Accordingly, any such information is excluded from this publication scheme. Where this occurs we outline which information has been withheld and explain what exemption has been applied and why.

Examples of exempt information under Part II of the Act include:

1. Information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters
2. Investigations and proceedings conducted by public authorities
3. Information likely to prejudice law enforcement
4. Court records including records of tribunals and inquiries
5. Information likely to endanger the health and safety of any individual
6. Personal data or information
7. Information provided in confidence
8. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
9. Commercial interests and trade secrets

It should also be noted that information is exempt from the Act if it is reasonably accessible to the applicant by other means. One example where information would qualify for this exemption is where it is made available via the authority's publication scheme. In instances where someone makes a written request for information, which is already available via the publication scheme, the Council will refer the applicant to the scheme.

Where the Council invokes the exemption provisions to withhold information, an applicant may seek a review of the decision.

6 Complaints/Review Procedure

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the response from the Council to a request for information or if a response from the Council for requested information is not received within 20 days, the applicant may proceed to a two-stage review process. An *internal* review must normally be completed before an appeal may be made to the Information Commissioner for an *independent* review.

An internal review should be sought through the office of the Chief Executive of the Council, O'Hagan House, Monaghan Row, Newry Co. Down, BT35 8DJ. A member of staff who was not involved with the original request will undertake the review.

If the applicant remains dissatisfied, he/she can seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Requests for a review by the Information Commissioner should be made in writing directly to: The Information Commissioner, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF (Tel: 01625 545 700; Fax: 01625 545 510).

7 Categorisation of Classes of Information

The following pages describe the various classes of information, under the following management headings:

- **Corporate Management**
- **Elected Members**
- **Personnel & Recruitment**
- **Financial Performance**
- **Procurement Practices**
- **Licensing & Approvals**
- **Services Provided**

CLASSES OF INFORMATION

7.1 Corporate Management

Information on how the Council manages its business - the structure of the Council; its committee system; its business plans and policies; reports produced by or on behalf of the Council; and its equality scheme.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Document Types/Description	Availability *
<i>Management Structure</i>	Who's who in the management of the Council; the Clerk/ Chief Executive, Directors and other senior managers. Information on membership of other public bodies where senior officers represent the Council's interests.	Organisational Charts	By Post
<i>Committee and Sub Committee Structure</i>	The committees and sub committees of the Council; membership (elected members, lay members and officials); their roles and responsibilities.	Committee Structures. Details of Committee Members	By Post, Website By Post
<i>Events Planned for the Current Financial Year</i>	Events and promotions planned, organised or funded within the Council area during the current financial year, including contact details.	List of approved events	By Post Web Site Tourist Information Offices
<i>Equality Scheme</i>	How the Council will fulfil its duty under Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act by putting equality and good relations at the heart of policy decisions.	Council's Equality Scheme REDI Project	By Post Web Site
<i>Economic Development Strategy</i>	The Council's economic development strategy for the Council area including information on partnerships with other major stakeholders.	Current Economic Development Strategy	By Post Web site
<i>Tourism Development Strategy</i>	The Council's tourism development strategy for the Council area including information on partnerships with other major stakeholders.	Tourism and Marketing Strategy Web page	By Post Web Site

<i>Community Development Strategy</i>	The Council's community development strategy for the Council area including information on partnerships with other major stakeholders.	Current Strategy	By Post Web Site
<i>Annual Report</i>	The Annual Report includes the Annual Accounts and details progress against objectives and targets throughout the past year.	Corporate Plan	By Post Web Site
<i>Best Value</i>	Information on what Best Value means in terms of improving service quality for citizens and what progress the Council is making in Best Value.	Statement of the Best Value Process Corporate Performance Improvement Plan Best Value Reviews on Current Services	By Post Web Site By Post
<i>Council Policies & Procedures (inc Standing Orders)</i>	The Council's policies, procedures and Standing Orders which apply to committees, sub committees, Council officials, their agents and subcontractors, and elected members. These documents define the way the Council carries on its affairs.	Council Standing Orders	By Post
<i>Council Minutes and Agendas</i>	A comprehensive record of Council proceedings. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include information provided in confidence).</i>	Minutes of all Council Meetings	By Post Meetings of Full Council on Website
<i>Reports & Investigations Commissioned by Council</i>	Each year the Council commissions various studies and investigations for the benefit of its citizens. These are the published reports produced as a result.	Various Reports	By post Web site
<i>Complaints Policy & Procedures</i>	Information on how to make a complaint on any aspect of the Council's services or facilities.	Complaints Procedure Complaints Forms	By Post, Web Site By Post, Web Site
<i>Charging Structure for Published Information</i>	Charges, if any, for information supplied by the Council.	Council Publication Scheme	By Post, Web Site

7.2 Elected Members

Information on the Councillors; the Code of Conduct they operate within; and payments due to them for various activities.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Document Types/Description	Availability *
<i>Information on Members</i>	Information on elected members including membership of committees and sub committees. Information on membership of other public bodies or representation of the Council on such bodies. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Committee Structure Including Membership Membership of outside bodies	By Post, Web Site By Post
<i>Code of Conduct for Councillors</i>	The Code of Conduct which Councillors operate within. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include information protected under legal professional privilege).</i>	Code of Conduct for Councillors	By Post
<i>Rates and Allowances</i>	Rates and allowances payable to Councillors while undertaking Council business. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	DOE Councillors Allowances Circular DOE Councillors Subsistence and Travelling Circular	By Post By Post
<i>Attendance Records</i>	Records of Councillor attendance at Council meetings, including committee and sub committee meetings. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Attendance Records	By Post

<i>Election Results and Expenses</i>	Records of Councillors' expenses from the most recent local government election. Copies of most recent election results. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Election Results Summary and Expenses June 2001	By Post
<i>Official Visits & Civic Functions</i>	Records of official and courtesy visits and civic functions within the current financial year and preceding financial year including attendees and costs incurred. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include personal data or information).</i>	Record of Civic Functions during the Current and Previous Year	By Post

7.3 Personnel & Recruitment

Information on how Council staff are recruited; their roles and responsibilities; rates of pay and expected standards of behaviour.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Document Types/Description	Availability *
<i>Job Roles</i>	Documents detailing the duties and responsibilities required of each job role within the Council.	List of Job Roles within the Council Duties and Responsibilities for each Job Role within the Council	By Post By Post
<i>Pay and Grading Structure</i>	The pay structure for grades of staff within the Council.	Northern Ireland Joint Council for Local Government Services Pay Rates	By Post
<i>Job Vacancies</i>	Current job vacancies and jobs advertised within the past year.	List of Current Job Vacancies Vacancies advertised within the last year	By Post, Web Site By Post
<i>Statutory Returns</i>	Annual reports on the composition of staff by grade, gender, etc in accordance with current legislation.	Equality Commission Monitoring Report Local Government Auditor Sickness Reports	By Post By Post

7.4 Financial Performance

Financial data showing the Council's income and expenditure.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Document Types/Description	Availability *
<i>Summary Accounts</i>	Summary financial data by service line and corporate overheads. The audited accounts, including the auditor's report, for the past six years.	Annual Accounts	By Post Last Audited Year on Web Site
<i>Annual Budgets</i>	Planned income and expenditure by service line and corporate overheads for the current financial year.	Annual Rates Estimates	By Post Web Site
<i>District and Regional Rates</i>	The rates applicable to businesses and householders in the current financial year.	Statement of rates	By Post Web Site

7.5 Procurement Practices

Information on how the Council procures products and services from suppliers.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Document Types/Description	Availability *
<i>Tendering Procedures</i>	Procedures and guidelines used in the tendering process for Council products and services.	Council Purchasing Procedures	By Post
<i>Tender Reports</i>	Tendering activity over the current financial year and preceding financial year. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include information provided in confidence or covered by commercial interest and trade secrets).</i>	Details of Tenders advertised	By Post

7.6 Licensing & Approvals

Information on how the Council grants licences for various trading activities within the Council area; standards and procedures for building control approvals and environmental health issues.

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Relevant Publications	Availability *
<i>Entertainment and Trading Licences</i>	Procedures regarding the granting of licences for entertainment; amusement; street trading; and petroleum retailing. Also allocation of market stalls. How to apply for such licences or permits.	Procedures	By post
<i>Building Control</i>	Standards and procedures regarding building control approval and how to go about applying.	Procedures and Documents	
<i>Building Control Approvals</i>	Current Building Control applications and approvals granted within the last 2 years.	List of Applications and Approvals	By post
<i>Building Control Inspections</i>	Annual departmental performance report in relation to building control applications received, as measured against departmental plan.	Performance Outputs	By post
<i>Environmental Health</i>	Standards and procedures for the public and businesses and guidelines on environmental health matters. Council's enforcement policy in relation to breaches of legislation.	Standards and Procedures	By Post
<i>Environmental Health Inspections</i>	Annual performance report on Environmental Health activity as measured against targets contained within Departmental Action Plan. <i>(Some of the information in this class is derived from documents considered to contain exempt information. See Section 5 'Exempt Information' above. For example, this class may include information likely to prejudice law enforcement).</i>	Performance Outputs	By Post
<i>Dog Licensing</i>	Procedure for applying for a dog licence and fees involved.	Procedures	By post Web site
<i>Council Bye Laws</i>	Bye laws made by the Council.	Details of Council Bye Laws	By post Web site

7.7 Services Provided

Information on the range of services and facilities available from the Council. *(NB Councils should refer to their published Equality Schemes to ensure that all services listed therein are covered in their FOI Publication Scheme. The information classes below are representative for many councils).*

Charges: Information is provided free of charge, or at the rate shown in the Council's Charging Structure for Published Information.

* **Availability Column:** Detail how to access each document, eg, Website; Post; Council Offices; Local Libraries, and the date of availability

Class of Information	Description	Document Types/Description	Availability *
<i>Council Offices</i>	Information on Council offices, addresses, opening hours, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Schedule of opening hours, services and contacts	By post At Offices Web site
<i>Arts & Cultural Facilities</i>	Information on arts and cultural facilities within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Schedule of opening hours, services and contacts	By post At Offices Web site
<i>Tourism</i>	Information on tourist facilities and services within the Council area including (where applicable) addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Schedule of opening hours, services and contacts	By post At Offices Web site
<i>Leisure Facilities & Services</i>	Information on leisure facilities within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Schedule of opening hours, services and contacts	By post At Offices Web site
<i>Community Centres & Services</i>	Information on community centres and outreach facilities and services within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Schedule of opening hours, services and contacts	By post At Offices Web site
<i>Travelling People</i>	Information on the Council's policies towards Travelling People, the facilities available and contact details.	Schedule of opening hours, services and contacts	By post At Offices Web site

<i>Parks and Grounds</i>	Information on parks and grounds within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, telephone numbers and other contact details	Details on locations and facilities	By post
<i>Markets</i>	Information on markets within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, 'Customers Charter', main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Details on locations and facilities	By post Web Site
<i>Registration of Births, Deaths & Marriages</i>	Information on offices, addresses, opening hours, main telephone numbers and other contact details.	Locations and Service details	By post Web Site
<i>Street Naming, Postal Numbering and Property Certificates</i>	Information on Street Naming, Postal Numbering and Property Certificates, including addresses, telephone numbers and other contact details.	Details on function and processes	By post Web Site
<i>Building Control</i>	Information on the full range of functions carried out by Building Control including Dangerous Buildings and Structures.	Details on function and services	By post Web Site
<i>Environmental Health</i>	Information on the full range of functions carried out by the Department under the core function headings of Food Safety, Health and Safety at Work, Consumer Protection, Pollution and Noise Control, Licensing and Regulatory and General Environmental Health matters.	Details on function and services	By post Web Site
<i>Refuse Collection, Waste Disposal & Recycling (Domestic & Trade)</i>	Information on refuse collection routes & timetables, 'bulky' collection services, landfill sites, skip sites, depots including (where appropriate) addresses, opening hours, fees and charges, main telephone numbers and other contact details. Details of the Council's recycling policy and facilities. Supply of refuse containers and 'wheelie bins'.	Details on function and services	By post Web Site
<i>Street Cleansing & Litter Control</i>	Information on street cleansing and litter control services including street cleaning rotas and contact details.	Details on function and services	By post Web Site
<i>Public Conveniences</i>	Locations, charges (if any), cleaning schedules, and contact details for further queries.	Location details and schedules	By post Web Site
<i>Bus Shelters</i>	Locations and contact details for further queries.	Location details	By post

<i>Cemetery & Cremation Services</i>	Information on cemetery and cremation services and facilities within the Council area including addresses, opening hours, charging mechanisms, telephone numbers and other contact details. Also information on cemetery maintenance.	Details of service provision	By post Web Site
<i>Dog Warden Service</i>	Information on how the Council deals with stray dogs, the enforcement of dog fouling laws and investigations into dog attacks on other animals and people. Also charging mechanisms, telephone numbers and other contact details.	Details of service provision	By post Web Site
<i>Harbour Facilities</i>	Information on harbour facilities within the Council area, including charging mechanisms, addresses, and contact details.	Details of service provision	By post