

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Introduction

Stockport Council implemented the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('FOIA') with the aim of promoting an understanding of the work understanding within the Council/

We do this by being transparent about the way we make our decisions and by providing clear information about our policies and procedures. This is primarily achieved through our publication scheme; however we also deal with individual requests for information which is not included in the scheme and provide advice and assistance if necessary.

Guide to the Publication Scheme

The information below is a guide to the Council's publication scheme, made under the FOIA. It follows the format recommended by the Information Commissioner and is designed to assist you by providing some examples of the types of information the Council routinely publishes under each of the seven classes in the scheme.

The classes within the scheme are:

1. Who we are and what we do
2. What we spend and how we spend it
3. What our priorities are and how are we doing
4. How we make decisions
5. Our policies and procedures
6. Lists and registers
7. Services provided by the Council

The majority of the information within the publication scheme is available on the Council's website and links provided against each piece of information will take you directly to the relevant web page or document. Where a specific document is indicated within this guide it refers to the current or most recent version. The Council will endeavour to maintain these links but please contact us if you find that the link is out of date or inactive. Alternatively, if you are searching for specific information, you can use the search facility in the top right hand corner of each page or the A-Z menu.

Some information within the publication scheme may only be available in paper format or for inspection at Council offices. Whilst the vast majority of information is made available free of charge, there may be circumstances when a small charge will be made to cover costs. Such charges will be in accordance with the Council's charging policy detailed below and will be explained when the information is requested, before any searches are conducted or costs incurred.

All information published by the Council is made available under the terms of the **Open Government Licence** for public sector information. You are encouraged to use or re-use this data under the terms of the licence which are available by visiting the [National Archives website](#).

In order to make Council information easier to access, re-use and analyse this is published in an '**Open Data**' format wherever possible. We aim to meet or exceed the Government's Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency to the 'three star' level or above by publishing data sets in a re-usable format without restriction.

This guide and the operation of the scheme will be reviewed annually.

Requesting additional information

The Council includes as much information in the publication scheme as it can, however if you would like to request official information held by the Council which is not routinely made available to the public via the publication scheme, you are entitled to do so by making a FOIA request.

FOIA requests must be made in writing either by email, letter or fax. Please address your request to the Freedom of Information Officer (email: foi.officer@stockport.gov.uk; tel: 0161 474 5299)

Once your request is received, it will be recorded and acknowledged. If further information is required before your request can be answered the Council will request it from you as soon as possible.

You will also be notified of any charges relating to your request e.g. photocopying or postage then asked if you wish to proceed.

The Council will respond to your request within **20 working days** as required under the FOIA.

If the information you requested is held by the Council, it will be provided to you in the format you requested where appropriate, unless some or all of the information is exempt from disclosure.

Where information is exempt, you will be provided with an explanation of which exemption from the FOIA applies, why it is in the public interest to maintain the exemption and details of how to appeal the decision.

Making a complaint, suggestion or compliment

You may wish to contact the Council to discuss how your FOIA request was handled or make any other comments about the service you received. If you are not satisfied with the Council's response to a request for information made under the FOIA or if you have any other comments or suggestions, you should contact the Freedom of Information Officer as above.

Alternatively, you can contact the Council's Corporate Complaints Officer using the information on the [Compliments and Complaints about Council Services](#) pages on the Council website.

If you remain dissatisfied after going through the complaints process you can complain to the [Information Commissioner](#).

Will I be charged for information?

The Council aims to provide as much information as possible on the Council website, free of charge.

Information within the publication scheme can be found using the search facility or A to Z feature. Some information included in the publication scheme may also be made for actual disbursements such as:

- Photocopying
- Printing
- Postage and packaging
- The cost directly incurred as a result of viewing information.

Any charges will be in accordance with the Council's policy.

THE PUBLICATION SCHEME

1. WHO WE ARE AND WHAT DO WE DO

- **Council Constitution**

The Constitution explains and regulates how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that the Council's activities are undertaken in a way that is efficient and transparent and that Councillors remain accountable to local people. The Constitution combines all the governance provisions that the Council is required by law to adopt.

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=587&info=1&md=constitution>

- **Council democratic structure**

Details of Councillors and the Council's decision making arrangements, including the Executive and Area Committees. You can also view [webcasts of recent council meetings](#).

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=140>

- **Council organisational chart**

Information about the Council's Wider Leadership Team, directorate structure and responsibility for different service areas across the Council.

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/transparency/organisational-information>

- **Location and Opening times of Council properties**

Information about locations, opening times and contact details of all the Council's centres/buildings which enable the public to access Council services.

<http://maps.stockport.gov.uk>

- **Currently elected councillors' information and contact details**

Currently elected councillors including party, membership of committees, address, telephone number and email contact.

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgFindMember.aspx>

- **Contact details for all customer-facing departments**

Telephone numbers for services via the Contact Centre or one-stop shops. Please also see the pages of individual services e.g. Housing Benefit for specific contact details.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/contactus>

- **Most recent elections**

Election results indicating the political composition of the Council, along with other elections held locally including Parliamentary Elections and Police & Crime Commissioner Elections.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/elections>

- **Relationships with other Authorities**

Information about the partners and partnerships that Stockport Council works with is contained on external websites. Some of these are shown below, although this is not a comprehensive list:

- Stockport Partnership - <http://www.stockportpartnership.org.uk/>
- Safer Stockport Partnership - <http://www.saferstockport.org.uk/>
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/>
- Transport for Greater Manchester - <http://www.tfgm.com/>
- GM Waste Disposal Authority - <http://www.gmwda.gov.uk/>
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- <http://www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/>

Stockport Council is working in collaboration with other councils to deliver a number of shared services. Information on these arrangements can be obtained from the service concerned, or from the Freedom of Information Officer.

The Council is also the lead authority for HM Coroners GM South District which covers Stockport, Trafford and Tameside. The Coroners reception is currently shared with the Registrars service at Stockport Town Hall, and cases are heard at Stockport Magistrates Court. Further information is available on the Coroners website.

<http://www.coronersmanchestersouth.org.uk/>

2. WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT

- **The Council's Budget, financial statements and variance reports**

The Council budget is set annually by the Council, usually in late February or early March. The latest budget report is available here:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/budget>

The Council's statement of accounts is available here, and is also published annually in the Stockport Review.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/statementofaccounts>

The Council also publishes details of all expenditure over £500 on a monthly basis on the Council website [Transparency](#) page.

- **Monitoring reports**

Quarterly Performance and Resource reports show the amount the Council is spending, what is spent on and the sources of funding. These include major expenditure on projects within the Council's Capital Programme

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/budget>

- **Financial audit reports**

The Council's annual Audit letter published by its External Auditor

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/statementofaccounts>

Further audit reports can be found within the papers presented to the Council's Audit Committee

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=147>

- **The members' allowances scheme and the allowances paid under it to councillors each year**

Current members' allowance scheme and the allowances and expenses of current elected members.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/membersallowances>

- **Staff allowances and expenses**

Mileage, accommodation, and subsistence rates which can be claimed by staff.

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/transparency/organisational-information>

- **Pay and grading structure**

Salary bands for all grades, including senior and chief officer grades.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/payandgrades>

The Council also publishes an annual policy Pay Policy Statement, the latest version of which is available on the 'Transparency' webpage. Senior Officers pay and responsibilities are also set out on the 'Transparency' webpage.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/transparency>

- **Procurement procedures**

Details of the Council's procedures for acquiring goods or services.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/corporateprocurement>

- **Details of contracts and tenders**

Details of current contracts and contracts available for public tender are shown on the Council website Transparency page and on The Chest, the North West Council Procurement Portal.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/transparency>

<https://www.the-chest.org.uk/cms/CMS.nsf/vLiveDocs/5748031C7DA7CEAB8025735B004A94D1?OpenDocument>

- **Details of grants paid to local voluntary and community organisations**

Details of grants available to Community Groups and Voluntary Organisations in Stockport, including eligibility criteria, deadlines and how to apply.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/community-funding>

- **Funding for partnership arrangements**

The Council contributes to a wide range of partnership arrangements. These are published across a number of specific reports and websites.

3. WHAT OUR PRIORITIES ARE AND HOW WE ARE DOING

- **The Council Plan**

The Stockport Council Plan sets out the Council's priorities and objectives.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/councilplan>

- **Medium Term Financial Plan**

The Council's spending plans for the next three years are updated and agreed annually by the Budget Council Meeting.

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/budgets-and-financial-monitoring>

- **Performance and Resource Reports**

The Council reports quarterly on how it is delivering the Council Plan priorities and spending plans.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/performance>

- **Strategies and business plans for services provided by the Council**

These can be located using the A to Z facility or 'Our Services' on the front page of the Council website.

- **Strategies developed in partnership with other authorities**

The Investing In Stockport Borough Plan 2015-20 sets out the Stockport Partnership's long term plan for Stockport and its priorities for achieving this vision.

<http://www.stockportpartnership.org.uk/>

- **Economic development action plan**

Stockport's Economic Development Strategy was developed as a result of consultation with key stakeholders during 2011. It has a five year life, from 2012 to 2017 and forms a blueprint for the prioritisation of economic development initiatives in Stockport.

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/economic-development-strategy-2012-2017>

- **Forward plan**

The Council's forward Plan which details the key decisions that the Council's Executive is going to take over a four-month period.

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=734>

- **Capital Strategy**

The Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan are included in the Council's medium Term Financial Strategy

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2501>

- **Statistical information produced in accordance with the Council's requirements**

MyStockport provides information about your local area and its residents, in one central point online. Information can be viewed from borough to small local level, in charts, table and maps. This includes population data from the 2011 census, health and employment data.

<http://www.mystockport.org.uk/>

4. HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

- **Timetable of Council meetings**

Committee dates for the current year.

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&cr=1>

- **Agendas, officers' reports, background papers and minutes of council committee, sub-committee and standing forum meetings.**

Public information on the Council's decision making processes.

<http://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

- **Major policy proposals and decisions**

See links above to the Council's Forward Plan and agendas. You can use the search facility for specific documents.

- **Facts and analyses of facts considered when framing major policies**

Information on the Council's Forward Plan and via public information on the Council's decision making recording system. Please search online Committee Papers for further information.

- **Public consultations**

Consultation papers or information, any summary of the responses and the outcome of the consultation exercise.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/haveyoursay>

- **Internal guidance**

Internal instructions, manuals and guidelines for dealing with the business of the Council are available on request from the service concerned or the FOI Officer.

5. OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- **Policies and procedures for conducting council business**

The Council's Constitution can be found on the Transparency webpage.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/transparency>

- **Policies and procedures for delivering our services**

These can be located using the A to Z facility or 'Our Services' on the front page of the Council website.

- **Policy pay statement**

The Annual Pay Policy Statement can be found on the Transparency webpage.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/transparency>

- **Policies and procedures about recruitment and employment of staff**

Information on current vacancies, employee benefits, Equality and Diversity scheme and how to apply for a job with the Council is published on the Council website.

<http://jobs.stockport.gov.uk/>

- **Customer Service**

Details of how to contact the Council, how to make a complaint and who to contact:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/contactus>

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/compliments-comments-and-complaints>

- **Records management and personal data policies**

For example, accessing personal data, data protection and privacy notices:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/foi>

6. LISTS AND REGISTERS

Most of these documents are available for public inspection at council offices. Please contact the relevant service listed on the website for details of how to inspect the registers or contact the FOI officer if you cannot find what you are looking for.

- **Public registers and registers held as public records**

For example: Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages;
Register of Electors;
Register of Licenced Premises; and
Register of Taxi Drivers

- Stockport Register Office – 0161 217 6007
<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/registeroffice>
- Stockport Electoral Registration Office – 0161 217 6026
<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/elections>
- Stockport Licensing team – 0161 474 4311
<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/licensing>

- **Asset registers**

Location of Council land and building assets, and key information relating to these can be found on the Transparency page of the Council website:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/transparency>

- **Disclosure logs**

The Council does not currently publish a record of all information provided in response to requests. However, we do publish the most commonly-requested datasets from Freedom of Information requests to enable easier access to this data without having to submit a formal request.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/transparency>

- **Register of councillors financial and other interests, including gifts and hospitality**

Register of Members Interests in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. Specific requests for information should be made via the FOI Officer

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/registerofinterests>

- **Highways, licensing, planning, commons, footpaths etc.**

For example Definitive Maps, Register of Adopted Highways, Register of Planning Applications, Register of Common Land – available for public inspection at council offices.

Planning applications can be searched and viewed on-line:

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/planningapplications>

7. SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE COUNCIL

Details of all the Council's services can be found in the Council's Directory of Services

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk>

- **Regulatory and licensing responsibilities**

Information on licensing and other requirements for events and services such as car boot sales, charity collections, animal boarding, gambling, street trading and taxis.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/licensing>

- **Services for local businesses**

Information on business events, relevant legislation, business rates, finding premises and procurement processes.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/business>

- **Services for other organisations**

For example student groups, youth groups and club activities.

Organisations should contact the service concerned.

- **Services for members of the public**

Details of all the Council's Services can be found in the Council Directory of Services

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk>

- **Information for visitors to the area, leisure information, events, museums, libraries and archive collections**

Information about the local area

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/discoverstockport>

- **Leaflets, booklets and newsletters**

Various leaflets and council publications are available in Council offices, district centres and libraries. These may also be available on-line by using the search facility on the Council website.

- **Advice and guidance**

For example, advice on debts and benefits, consumer advice and affordable housing.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/advice>

- **Media releases**

Latest news and press releases can be found on the Council's News Room page.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/news>

- **Election information**

For example election results, forthcoming elections and voting procedures.

<http://www.stockport.gov.uk/elections>