

## Freedom of Information FAQ's



### **What is Freedom of Information?**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 is designed to promote the accountability of a public authority.

Anyone can request non personal information from the authority.

In addition to this, all public authorities have a "publication scheme". This is a list of documents available to the public.

The act gives the public greater scope to scrutinise the authority and find answers to their questions.

There are some reasons why information can be legitimately withheld, but many types of information will be released if requested.

### **How long will it take to respond to my request?**

We have a legal duty to respond to your request within 20 working days (weekends and bank holidays are not counted). If we need to consider certain exemptions this may take longer. If this is the case we will contact you within the deadline to inform you of the delay.

### **Will making a request cost me anything?**

Not normally. However, we have a right to charge for costs incurred such as photocopying or postage. We have a right to refuse a request if we estimate it will take more than 18 ½ hours to search for the information. The majority of our requests are responded to free of charge.

### **Will my request be refused?**

In some cases the act allows for a request to be refused. There are two types of exemptions; absolute (no public interest test) and qualified (release would only be made in the public interest). A public interest test considers if the public interest in withholding outweighs the public interest in releasing the information. results of public interest tests are published on the web site.