

Renfrewshire Council

**Freedom of Information
(Scotland) Act 2002**

Publication Scheme



**Renfrewshire
Council**

Renfrewshire Council is committed to providing information on request whenever possible. As part of that commitment, we have produced this publication scheme. This is arranged under headings or categories and gives you details about what information you can get from the Council without having to make a formal freedom of information request.

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Part 1 Introduction

1. Who we are: an introduction to Renfrewshire Council

Renfrewshire Council is a unitary local authority delivering services to approximately 173,000 people in west central Scotland. Geographically, Renfrewshire covers around 270 square kilometres, and it sits to the SW of Glasgow, bounded on the North by the River Clyde, on the West by Inverclyde, by Ayrshire on the South, and by East Renfrewshire on the East. We serve the towns of Paisley, Johnstone, Renfrew, and Erskine along with a number of other communities within the surrounding area.

The Council employs 9,000 staff, making us the biggest employer in the area. We have eight departments providing a broad range of services to the people of Renfrewshire. The Council has an annual budget of around £400 million, and is arranged into the following departments:

- Chief Executives
- Corporate Services
- Education and Leisure Services
- Environmental Services
- Finance and Information Technology
- Housing and Property Services
- Planning and Transport
- Social Work

The Departments are responsible for the following functions:

- **Chief Executive's Department**

Best value; community planning; corporate communications and marketing; corporate strategy; emergencies planning; modernising government; neighbourhood renewal; Paisley social inclusion partnership; policy analysis; press and publicity; urban policy.

- **Corporate Services Department**

Civic government and liquor licensing; commissionaire service; committee and member services including joint boards; district court; elections; health and safety; litigation; legal advice; contracts; conveyancing; mail services; civic and ceremonial duties;; personnel services; printing services; property enquiry certificate service; registration; senior citizen's scheme; skillseekers; training and development.

- **Education & Leisure Services**

Community education provision; community facilities; community learning centres; child care and out of school care; early education; education development service; free meals, clothing; bursaries; libraries; museum; the arts; placing requests primary schools; secondary schools; schools for those with special educational needs; sports development; support services; transport provision.

- **Environmental Services**

Building cleaning; janitorial services; catering; school crossing patrols; consumer and trading standards; weights and measures; counterfeit goods; control of pollution; noise; pests; litter; environmental issues; food safety; occupational health and safety; health promotion; parks and cemeteries; refuse collection and disposal; street cleaning; public conveniences; civic amenity sites; recycling; management of internal transport operations.

- **Finance & IT**

Council tax and non domestic rates; housing benefit; debt recovery; information technology services; insurance and risk management; internal audit; monitoring revenue and capital budgets; payroll; purchases and payments; preparation and publication of financial reports and annual accounts; treasury management, call centre; customer contact centre; switchboard; receptionists;.

- **Housing & Property Services Department**

Capital investment; area renewal; energy and money advice; estate management; grants for owners; homelessness; housing allocations; rent allowances management; maintenance and management of public buildings; provision of project management, professional and technical services; rent collection and arrears recovery; repairs and maintenance; repairs to housing stock and public buildings.

- **Planning & Transport**

Conservation of the natural and built heritage including countryside and access legislation; economic development; environmental improvement works; European matters; planning and building control; the development plan; maintenance of roads, footways, bridges, street lighting and street/traffic signs; winter maintenance; maintenance of watercourses and flood prevention works; traffic management and road safety; support infrastructure for public transport; tourism.

- **Social Work**

Care for older people and those with a disability; child protection; fostering; adoption; community care; community service scheme; criminal justice; probation; promotion of social welfare; support for children, young people and families and support for the victims of crime; area teams; joint commissioning; planning and social inclusion.

The Council's Publication scheme also contains information about the joint committees whose work covers this area.

You can find out more about the Council by visiting our website at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk.

For information on the Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board, or on the Renfrewshire Licensing Board, please see their separate publication schemes.

2. What is Freedom of Information?

Freedom of Information in Scotland was established by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. This provides a statutory right of access to the information held by public authorities in Scotland. A few narrow exemptions do apply - such as that covering personal data, which is still governed by the Data Protection Act 1998 - but the Freedom of Information Act now gives a general right to know regarding information held by public bodies in Scotland.

The Act covers many thousands of public authorities in Scotland, including the Scottish Parliament, local authorities, health boards and police forces. The main provisions of the Act - the public right of access to information - came into force on the 1st January 2005.

The Act is overseen by the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, an independent body established by the Act. The contacts for the Commissioner are given at the end of this document.

Freedom of Information intends to foster a greater spirit of openness and deliver greater accountability from Scottish public authorities to the people we serve. In due course it is hoped that a culture of “our records” will be replaced by one of “public information.”

3. What is the publication scheme?

The publication scheme is a statutory requirement under Section 23 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. The Council's first scheme was approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner in August 2004. This present revised version was approved in 2007. It is the intention of the Act that the scheme should be flexible and reflect the information being created and held by the Council at any time. Consequently, this scheme will be under periodic review by Council officers and will be revised as required in the future with the aim of making as much information available as we can.

The scheme specifies classes of information which the Council intends to make available, how we intend to make that information available, and whether there is a charge.

The revised scheme has been carefully developed by a Council working group, comprising senior officers from every department. Consideration has been given to the guidance issued by the Information Commissioner on this subject, and our aim has been to develop a scheme which could be of practical use and real value to anyone wishing to find out about the Council.

In deciding on what to include, we conducted an audit of information of the entire Council, and considered frequently asked questions from all the main services which interact with the public. The results of this information audit has been built into a classification scheme, and it is in this way that our publication scheme has been structured.

The advice of the Scottish Information Commissioner has been sought on a number of issues, and we have liaised with the relevant professional bodies and other Scottish local authorities.

We have also consulted the public, using our website and posters at Council Headquarters, and asked for their views on what they would like to see in the scheme and what formats they would like it available in.

The person with overall responsibility for the scheme is:-

Richard Sharp
Archivist
Corporate Services Department
Renfrewshire House
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1TR
(e-mail: richard.sharp@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

and we would welcome any feedback that you might have.

4. How do I use the publication scheme?

The publication scheme is available in hard (paper) copy or online. You will find a link to the scheme on our website (www.renfrewshire.gov.uk) or a hard copy at any of our libraries or main receptions. Renfrewshire's publication scheme is a list of classes of information. These have been arranged into sub-categories and then into ten main categories to help you find information quickly. These categories are:-

1. Business
2. Community and Living
3. Education and Learning
4. Environment
5. Housing
6. Legal Services
7. Leisure and Culture
8. Social Care and Health
9. Transport and Streets
10. Your Council

This classification scheme has been based on the Local Authority Website scheme for classifying all the different types of information which the Council holds, and is being used by most Scottish Local Authorities to arrange the material in their scheme.

For ease of reference each class is arranged alphabetically within each sub-category, each sub-category arranged alphabetically within each category, and these too are in alphabetical order.

It should be noted that the publication scheme does not contain the actual information or documents themselves. Rather, it is a finding aid which describes the kinds or classes of information which we make available allowing you to find out what we have got and how to access it.

There are approximately 130 classes of information, and these are listed at the end of this document. There are further details which will tell you what media the information is available in, how you can contact us to get it, and whether there is material in that class which will carry a charge.

We are always happy to help individuals to frame requests so as to assist them to get the information that they want. If you need any further help in using this scheme, or in more general matters relating to Freedom of Information, please contact the departmental Fol contacts listed under Section 7 below, or Richard Sharp, the Council's Archivist, at the number given in Section 3 above.

Renfrewshire's aim is to be as open as possible. However, information may be withheld from any of the classes of information listed below if it falls under the exemptions specified in the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act. These include where disclosure may:

- seriously prejudice law enforcement;
- interfere with our regulatory or enforcement activity;
- be otherwise prohibited by law;
- might seriously prejudice the commercial interests or confidentiality of any person or organisation;
- cover data which is defined as personal data under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please note that even if the information is exempt, a request for it can still be made as the Act states that the public interest in releasing the information must be considered in all cases where exemptions apply. So, even if information is exempt, it may be released if the public interest is judged to be served by its release.

We will endeavour to make available as much of any document as is reasonably practicable, even if part of it is exempt. For example, a minute of a meeting referring to a personnel issue in passing would *not* mean that the remainder of the document would be withheld.

In all cases where information is withheld, we will give a full account of the reasons behind this decision as part of our response.

If you wish to complain, see the *What Can I Do If I'm Not Satisfied* section below.

5. Is there a charge?

In the spirit of the Act, Renfrewshire Council aims to make as much information as possible available to the public free of charge.

However, some classes of information may include documents for which there is a charge if paper copies are required. For charging purposes, there are four types of documents within the publication scheme.

1. Copies of documents which had previously been freely available will continue to carry no charge.
2. In addition, electronic copies of documents, where available, will be available for free.
3. Material which had carried a charge under a previously agreed charging regime, such as board and committee papers, or property enquiry certificates. These continue to carry the established charge.
4. The council is permitted to make a modest charge to cover the reasonable costs of staff time, copying, postage and packing, and this may be imposed on requests for paper copies of documents not covered by 1 - 3 above at the rate of 11p. per page.

Classes which contain material which may be subject to charges are marked with the symbol "£". This symbol indicates *either* that there is material in this class which had carried a charge under a previously agreed charging regime, *and/or* that the XXp per page charge will apply.

Further details of the charges which will apply to each document within a class will be available from the document-level list of documents, or from the contacts listed for each class in Part 2 of this scheme.

6. What else do I need to know ?

Copyright

Some information provided by the Council may be subject to copyright, and obtaining this information through the scheme does not convey a right to reuse it in a way that would infringe copyright.

Re-Use of Public Sector information Regulations

There may be a charge for the re-use of information supplied through the publication scheme or as a response to a request for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.

Retention of Information

The Council adopted an Archives Policy in 2001. Since then we have been building a retention schedule which defines how long we will retain all the different types of records which we generate, and also what their final disposition will be.

The retention periods agreed to cover records management more generally will also be applied to the material within our publication scheme.

If you would like copies of our Archives Policy or our Information Management Guidelines, or if there is anything else that you would like to know about how we manage our records, please contact the Archivist, at the number/address given at section 8.

7. How can I take my enquiry further?

If you want to find out more about the material in the publication scheme, or if you want to make an enquiry under Section 1 of the Act, please contact the relevant department:

Department	Tel No	Designation	E-mail address	Address
Chief Executive's	0141 840 3268	Information Manager	Chiefexec@renfrewshire.gov.uk	South Wing, 2nd floor, Renfrewshire House
Corporate Services	0141 840 3264	Administrative Officer	cs@renfrewshire.gov.uk	South Wing, 1st floor, Renfrewshire House
Education & Leisure Services	0141 842 5624 0141 840 3023 3264	Business/MIS Manager Information Lifelong Learning & ICT Manager	Schools.els@renfrewshire.gov.uk	Room 4.3, Directorate, Renfrewshire House Abbey House, Seedhill Road, Paisley
Environmental Services	0141 840 3152	Customer Services Manager	Es@renfrewshire.gov.uk	Room L.54, Customer Services Section, Renfrewshire House
Finance & IT	0141 842 5538/ 0141 842 5058	Assistant Manager Principal Auditor	finit@renfrewshire.gov.uk	Room 2.13, Revenues & Benefits Development Team, Renfrewshire House Room 3.12, Internal Audit, Renfrewshire House
Housing & Property Services	0141 840 3264	Administration Services Manager	Hps@renfrewshire.gov.uk	Room 5.01, Administration Services, Renfrewshire House
Planning & Transport	0141 842 5422	Principal Administrative Officer	pt@renfrewshire.gov.uk	Room 2.1, Administration Section, Renfrewshire House
Social Work	0141 842 5976	Co-ordinator	sw@renfrewshire.gov.uk	Social Work Business Support, Modernisation and Improvement Team, North Wing, 3rd floor, Renfrewshire House

If you are not sure which department you should be contacting please contact Richard Sharp, Archivist at the address given at Section 8.

8. What can I do if I am not satisfied?

If you are not satisfied with any element of the publication scheme, and have not got what you want from the person listed at (7) above, please write to:

Richard Sharp
Archivist
Corporate Services Department
Renfrewshire House
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1TR

Thereafter, the Council's internal review mechanism can be accessed by writing to:

Paul Gannon
Director of Corporate Services
Renfrewshire House
Cotton Street
Paisley
PA1 1TR

If you are unsatisfied with the decision reached at review then you have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner at the following address:-

Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle
Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9DS

Or by e-mail to: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

More details about the appeal process and general information regarding the operation of Freedom of Information legislation in Scotland are available on the Commissioners website at www.itspublicknowledge.info .