

Information will be available as:

- a copy in a permanent form or
- an inspection of the information or
- a digest of the information.

Although we will try to provide the information in the format you request, this may not always be practical. The information will be sent to you, or you will be asked to collect or inspect a copy. If we have withheld anything we will tell you and explain why.

If copyright restrictions apply, we will inform you. Multiple copies cannot be produced without a licence from the copyright holder.

Although information can often be provided free, if there are accessibility issues or we have to reproduce the information you request, we may need to make a small charge. See our website for details. If you request a large amount of information that will take us more than two and a half days to find we can refuse to provide it. If so, we will discuss your request with you to see if we can limit it to something more manageable.

If we do not hold the information you want, we will let you know. However, if we know who does hold it, and are able to send you contact details, we will do so.

You can request information as often as necessary. However, we may refuse any unreasonable requests eg. applying for the same or similar information frequently.

Once your request has been dealt with and you receive the information, check it to make sure it includes all that you have asked for.

You can complain in the first instance to the Council if you think the information is incomplete, or you believe we have unfairly withheld anything, or done anything else that has breached any of the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. You can complain by following our Complaints Procedure, whereby you will receive a written response and explanation from us. If you are not satisfied with this, you can then appeal to:

The Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 01625 545745

Full details of the complaints procedure can be found on our website www.westoxon.gov.uk. Alternatively, email enquiries@westoxon.gov.uk or call 01993 861000.

If you need help with any of the information or forms provided, please contact us.



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

Freedom of Information

A Guide to your rights to access recorded information held by the Council, subject to certain conditions and exemptions.

A Guide to advise and assist you about how to apply to access information held by the Council.



The Freedom of Information Act, 2000 sets out rules and conditions which local authorities and other government agencies must obey regarding the management and release of information.

We hold information on:

- You, and the services we provide to you
- Our staff and elected members
- Our administration
- Our decisions

Services provided by West Oxfordshire District Council:

Benefits administration
Council tax collection
Environmental Health
Housing
Leisure and tourism
Licensing
Planning
Waste collection and cleansing

Responsibility for maintaining records is with the section of the Council providing the service to you.

The information is held on computer, manual filing systems or video systems.

Records are kept only for as long as the law requires or for the time it takes to ensure that any services we provide have been effectively managed. If there is no legal requirement to keep the records they will be destroyed as soon as is practicable, normally within six years.

If you have difficulty in accessing the information we publish we will look at providing it in an alternative format. For example, where it is only published on our website but you do not have internet access; you have sight impairment or difficulties with literacy; or you need information in a different language. It may be necessary to make a charge for this service.

Information may be shared within the Council or other agencies involved in the provision of services, and will normally only be the minimum necessary to provide services for you. The Freedom of Information Act gives others the right to access this information, subject to certain conditions and exemptions. You can expect the information we hold to be shared unless this is not in the public interest, or:

- It is available, or will soon be available, publicly eg. on our website, council leaflets etc. (details of what is available can be found in our 'publication scheme').
- It can be accessed under other legislation eg. environmental information or your own personal information.
- It could adversely affect our activities where they relate to:
 - The economy.
 - Criminal or civil investigations and proceedings.
 - The prevention or detection of crime including the assessment or collection of taxes, or our regulatory and enforcement activities.
- It was provided in confidence.
- It contravenes the Data Protection Act.
- It would constitute contempt of court.
- It could adversely affect:
 - Any individual's physical or mental health or safety.
 - Commercial interests.
 - The relationship between a lawyer and their client.
- It could adversely affect the activities of other authorities including:
 - National security or defence
 - Audit functions
 - Public affairs

To request information, you will need to apply by letter, email or fax stating your name, address and details of the information you want to:

The Information Management Officer
West Oxfordshire District Council
Woodgreen
Witney OX28 1NB

When we receive your request we will try to respond within 20 working days, but in some cases, eg. where we need more details about the information you want or need to think about whether releasing the information may harm somebody, our processes or our country, it may take a little longer. If this is the case, we will give you an estimation of when you can expect to hear from us.

We may disclose information about you unless release of the information would be breaking the terms of an agreement with you, or breaking the rules laid down in the Data Protection Act. Then we will ask for your consent but if you refuse the information may still have to be given out if it is in the public interest. Our forms will normally tell you whether we regard the information you supply as confidential.

Information about others is not normally available, without their consent unless it is in the public interest to disclose it.