

REPORT OF: CLERK
SUBJECT: NEW TRANSPARENCY CODE FOR SMALLER AUTHORITIES
DATE: 5 JULY 2017

1 NEW TRANSPARENCY CODE FOR SMALLER AUTHORITIES

The Smaller Authorities (Transparency Requirements) (England) Regulations 2015 (in force from 1 April 2015) provides that town and parish councils in England, whose turnover does not exceed £25,000 *must publish the information specified in the Code in the manner and form and on the occasions specified in the Code*. The Code is the Transparency Code for smaller authorities published by DCLG in December 2014.

The Parish Council's annual turnover is approximately £65,000 and this Code does not, therefore, apply to this Council.

2 RECOMMENDATION

A Member has suggested that although the Code does not apply to Shavington-cum-Gresty Parish Council, it should be adopted in the interests of best practice.

3 POLICY CONTEXT

The Code has been introduced to meet the Government's aim to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability and make it easier for local people to contribute to the local decision-making process and help shape public services.

Transparency is the foundation of local accountability and gives local people the information they need to enable them to play a greater role in society.

There are three principles which have guided the development of the Code:

- 1 Demand Led: There are growing expectations that new technologies and publication of data should support transparency and accountability. It is vital that public bodies understand what they hold, what their communities want and then release the information in a way which allows the public, developers, and the media to use it.
- 2 Open: Provision of data should become integral to local authority engagement with local people. Its availability should be promoted and publicised so that residents are aware of how to access the information.
- 3 Timely: Information should make public data available as soon as possible, following its production, even if not accompanied with detailed analysis, where appropriate.

The Code does not replace or supersede the existing legal framework for access to public sector information; for example, the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms 2012).

4 FROM APRIL 2015 SMALLER COUNCILS SHOULD PUBLISH

The following is a list of information which is required for publication. A tick mark indicates that this is current practice.

- Minutes of formal meetings (including drafts of council, committee and sub-committee minutes no later than one month after the meeting). ✓
- Full and informative agendas not later than three clear days before the meeting to which they relate. (Note: the Clerk routinely issues the agenda five clear days before each meeting.) ✓

Shavington-cum-Gresty Parish Council

5 FROM JULY 2015 (AND ANNALLY THEREAFTER) SMALLER COUNCILS SHOULD PUBLISH

Note: A tick mark indicates that this is current practice.

- Details of every item of spend of £100 or more (exclusive of VAT) showing the date/purpose/amount/and VAT which cannot be recovered. Not currently published as specific items.
- End of Year accounts as per the Annual Return. ✓
- The annual governance statement as per the Annual Return. ✓
- Bank reconciliation statements. Published as part of the quarterly Receipts and Payments statements.
- The Internal Audit report as per the Annual Return. ✓
- Names of councillors, their responsibilities and which committees and outside bodies they are appointed to by the Council. ✓
- List of assets (land and buildings) Not currently published. Subject to review as recommended by the Internal Auditor as part of the review for 2016-2017.

The information should be published on the website. Where councils do not have their own website, the information can be published on another organisation's website; for example, the principal authority.

6 COUNCILS WITH ANNUAL TURNOVER EXCEEDING £25,000 BUT NOT EXCEEDING £200,000

There is no transparency code for this group of town and parish councils.

Carol Jones
Clerk