CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND UPDATES

COMMITTEE:	**Finance and Policy Committee**		
MEETING DATE AND TIME	**27th March 2025 7.00 pm**	**LOCATION**	**Congleton Town Hall**
REPORT FROM	**Serena Van Schepdael: R.F.O**		
AGENDA ITEM	**18**		
REPORT TITLE	**Publication Scheme review**		
Background	In accordance with the Information Commissioners Office under Freedom of Information rules and requirements Town and Parish Councils must have a Publication Scheme and we must publish information proactively. To help us do this the ICI has created a model Publication Scheme which can be accessed via this weblink: https://ico.org.uk/media2/migrated/1153/model-publication-scheme.pdf Our current Publication Scheme was last updated in 2018, since then we have introduced new Polices within our Constitution and some information on the current document are out of date.		
Update -	See Appendix 1 for the draft updates. Updates: In all sections, removed Hardcopy option where the document is available on the website, and removed website where the document is not available on the website. {table below}		

Section	Info
Introduction	Added introduction: Including note on charges.
Removed column of charges	All information is available via the website. If a printed copy of any policy is requested the Chagres information now at the bottom of the document, removed different charges for different documents.
Section 1	Removed old polices. About the Town Council, some of these documents are not easily available on the website as they are part of other polices/pages, so this information has been added to the publication scheme as an appendix.
Section 2	Updated document
Section 3	Removed outdated documents

	Section 4	No updates
	Section 5	Updated Policy titles where required and added all new policies introduced since the last review of the document.
	Section 6	Added missing documents
	Section 7	Removed documents no longer in use.
	Extra	Once new website in place the webpage to find the documents will be updated. Added version control
Decision Request	1. To approve draft updates to the Publication Scheme Document. 2. Recommend the Draft updated document to Council on 1st May 2025 for approval and adoption into the constitution.	

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL: Publication Scheme- Information Guide

INTRODUCTION

The Information Commissioner's Office has a model publication scheme to help local councils make relevant information available to the public. The Town Council adopted this scheme in October 2016 and we are always working to improve the quality and accessibility of the information available to the public under the scheme.

The scheme is available as a list below.
Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge.

Policies and documents are available on out website for downloading. If printed copies are requested charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred for information not available online such as below, our charges are noted at the bottom of this document:
- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

If you have any questions about the publication scheme please contact the Chief Officer by email on info@congleton-tc.gov.uk.
Information on the Publication Scheme requirements can be found at Publication schemes: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi/publication-schemes-a-guide/

This Publication Scheme has been created using the Model Scheme from The Information Commissioner guidance.

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INFORMATION TO BE PUBLISHED	HOW THE INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED/WEBSITE PAGE/MENU	
Class 1 – Who we are and what we do		
Where to find us-Location and map	Hard Copy Web Site: Your Council	
Committee Structure-current only	Web Site: Your Council	
About the Town Council-extract from Constitution		

Background to the Town Council
    How the Council operates
    How decisions are made
    Citizens' Rights
    Role and functions of councillors, Mayor & Deputy Mayor
    Honorary Burgesses
	Within the Publication Scheme document, Appendix 1	

Council and Committee Membership	Web Site: Committee Meetings	
Contact details for councillors	Newsletters Web Site: Meet the Councillors	
Officer Management Structure	Web Site: Meet the Team	
Contact details for Chief Officer and Managers	Newsletter Web Site: Your Council	
Ward details	Website: Meet the Councillors	
Summary and Explanation	Website: Constitution	
Class 2 – What we spend and how we spend it		
Financial Regulations-current only	Website: Constitution	
Standing Orders for Contracts-current only	Website: Constitution	
Approved Budget (including balances & Precept)-current and previous 3 years	Website	
Approved Budget & Precept-one page summary	Web Site: Constitution and Finance	
Investment Policy and Investment Strategy Policy-current only	Website: Constitution	
Procurement Policy-current only	Website: Constitution	
Grants & Funding Policy and Grants Criteria-current only	Website: Constitution	
Mayor's Allowance Scheme-current only	Website: Constitution	

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Medium Term Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy-current only	Website: Constitution
Annual return form and report by auditor-latest or previous 3 years	Hard Copy Website: Finance
Annual Accounts-most recent and previous 3 years	Hard Copy Website: Finance
Financial Management Report-most recent only	Website: Committees and Meetings; Finance Agendas
Borrowing Approval Letters-within last 3 years	Website: Finance
Grants received	Website: Finance
Grants given –List for current financial year and 3 previous years	Website: Finance
Grants given-last full year	Website: Finance
List of current contracts awarded and value of contract	Website: Finance
Members' allowances and expenses (No allowances are paid to Councillors other than Mayor & Deputy Mayor)	Website: Finance
Reserves Policy	Website: Constitution
Class 3 – What our priorities are and how we are doing	
Annual Report-Current and Previous 3 years	Hard Copy
External Audit Report-latest or previous 3 years	Hard Copy, Website: Finance
Internal Report-Final or Interim (latest or previous 3 years)	Hard Copy, Website: Finance
Business Plan 2020-2023	Website: Constitution
Class 4 – How we make decisions	
Information & Data Protection Policy	Website: Constitution

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Minutes of Annual Town Meeting-latest and previous year	Website: Committees and Meetings
Reports to Annual Town Meeting-latest and previous 3 years	Website: Committees and Meetings
Timetable of meetings (Council, any committee/working group meetings, and parish meetings) current & last year	Hard Copy Website: Committees and Meetings
Agendas of meetings- current & previous 3 years	Website: Committees and Meetings
Minutes of meetings –current & previous 3 years)	Website: Committees and Meetings
Reports presented to council meetings-current & previous 3 years – **Nb. this will exclude information that is properly regarded as private to the meeting.**	Website: Agenda in Committees and Meetings
Responses to consultation papers	Hard Copies
Responses to planning applications	Website: Committees and Meetings: Planning minutes
Bye-laws-where applicable	Hard Copies

Class 5 – Our Policies and Procedures	All in Constitution
Standing Orders	Website
Quality Policy	Website
Customer Care Policy	Website
Terms of Reference of Committees & Delegation Scheme	Website
Communications & Social Policy	Website
Members Code of Conduct	Website
Officers Code of Conduct	Website
Protocol on Member/Officer Relations	Website
ICT Policy	Website
Environmental Policy	Website
Policies and procedures for the provision of services and about the employment of staff.	Website
Community & Marketing Policy	Website
Child & Vulnerable Adult Policy	Website
Equality policy	Website

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Health and Safety Policy	Website
Current employment vacancies	Website
Job Descriptions & Person Specifications of current posts	Web Site for vacancies
Publication Scheme & Information Guide	Website
Complaints Code & Procedure	Website
	Website
Document Retention Policy	Website
Schedule of charges for Town Hall	Website
Pension Discretion Policy	Website
Banners, A-Boards & Signage Policy	Website
CCTV Policy	Website
Complaints Policy	Website
Customer Care and Complaints Policy (Vexatious Policy)	Website
Data Privacy Notice	Website
Document Retention Policy	Website
Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy and Procedures	Website
Flag Flying Policy	Website
Prohibiting Weapons in the Workplace	Website
Town Hall Equipment Policy	Website
Town Hall Letting Policy	Website
Training and Development Policy	Website
Volunteer Policy	Website
Civic Protocol	Website
Employee Handbook	Website
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Class 6 – List and Registers	
Members Declaration of Acceptance of Office	Hard Copy

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Candidates at last election	Hard Copy
Fixed Assets Register-current and previous 3 years	Website: Constitution
Register of members' interests	Website: Meet the Councillors
Register of gifts and hospitality	Website: Constitution
Business Risk Assessment	**Website: Constitution**
Disaster Recovery & Business Continuity Plan	**Website: Constitution**
Class 7 – The services we offer	
Town Ancient Records	Available for inspection by appointment
Allotments	Website: News
Paddling Pool	Website: News
Town Hall	Website: Town Hall
Additional Information	
Glossary of Terms & Acronyms	**Website: Constitution**
Bear Necessities Newsletter-current and for previous year	Hard Copy Web Site
Town Guide-current	Hard Copy Web Site
Press releases-previous year only	Hard Copy Web Site
Information relating to the last Periodic Electoral Review of the Council's area	Hard Copy
Information relating to the latest Boundary Review of the Council's area	Hard Copy
Congleton Partnership's Constitution	Hard Copy
Congleton Shopping Guide	Hard Copy Web Site

SCHEDULE OF CHARGES

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This describes how the charges have been arrived at and should be published as part of the guide.

TYPE OF CHARGE	DESCRIPTION	
Disbursement Cost	Photocopy @ 10.p per sheet (black & white)	
	Photocopying @ 20 p per sheet (colour)	
	Postage: Actual cost	

Please note, document charges are based on photocopy costs, however these may be varied where documents have to be compiled specially. In some cases, where a small number of documents only are requested, we may decide not to charge if the administrative cost of raising the charge is disproportionate.

APPENDIX 1

HOW THE COUNCIL OPERATES

- Congleton Town Council has 22 Councillors serving five wards. Councillors are not paid and are elected every four years to serve the people living and working in their area. Congleton Wards are: West Ward (West Heath), North Ward (Lower Heath), Central Ward (Astbury Mere), North east Ward (Buglawton), South East Ward (Mossey & Timbersbrook). The terms of office of Councillors is four years.
- Councillors have to agree to follow a code of conduct to ensure high standards in the way they undertake their duties which includes the declaration of interests in matters considered by council. The Council adopted its revised Members Code of Conduct in January 2020. Cheshire East Council is responsible for promoting and ensuring the standards of conduct by unitary and town Councillors. Their Monitoring Officer deals with complaints about the behaviour of Councillors under the Code.

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- All Councillors meet together as the full council approximately every two months. The Annual Town Council is held in May, with ordinary meetings every second month. The budget for the forthcoming financial year is decided at the latest in January. It is at full council that members decide the Council's overall policies, set the budget each year and deal directly with the more major issues. Each year at the annual meeting Councillors elect a Town Mayor; who also holds the statutory position of Chair, and a Deputy Mayor.
- The Council appoints committees which deal with the more detailed or routine items of business. Certain decisions may be delegated by full council to these committees, all other items are dealt with as recommendations to be ratified at a meeting of full council. Council also establishes working parties or sub-committees, which do not usually have decision making powers but look at the detail of future policy or services in a depth and make recommendations to the parent Committee.

The Council has a number of committees:-
- Finance and Policy Committee; Personnel Committee; Planning Committee; Town Hall and Assets Committee; Environment Committee and Community Committee. Our Committees can be found here: Committee Meetings - Congleton Town Council
- There are also a number of Working Groups within the Council. Working group are sub-committees of one of the main Committees, and are created to discuss projects and approvals of those Committees, working groups have no authorisation to make final decisions and they do not have spending powers. Our working groups can be found here: Working Groups - Congleton Town Council

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE
- All formal meetings of council and its committees are subject to statutory notice being given, and the Council publishes an annual programme each year. Meetings are always publicised on the web site. All formal meetings are open to the public and press. Reports to those meetings and relevant background papers are available for the public to see.
- Occasionally, council or committees may need by law to consider matters in private. Examples of this are matters involving personal details of staff, or a particular member of the public, or where details of commercial sensitivity are to be discussed. This will only happen after a formal resolution has been passed to exclude the press and public. Minutes from all formal meetings, including the confidential parts are public documents.

THE COUNCIL'S STAFF
- The council has people working for it (called 'officers'). The Organisational Chart for Congleton Town Council is available on the website. Officers implement decisions and manage the day-to-day delivery of its services. The Chief Officer has specific duties as the "Proper Officer" to ensure that the council acts within the law.
- The Council have a Responsible Finance Officer which is a statutory role to ensure that financial best practice is followed.

- **Our Staff Structure can be found here: Meet the Team - Congleton Town Council**

CITIZENS' RIGHTS
Citizens have a number of rights in their dealings with the Council. Some of these are legal rights, whilst others depend on the Council's own processes..
Citizens have the right to:
- Vote at local elections if they are registered;
- Contact their local Councillor about any matters of concern to them;
- View a copy of the Constitution;
- Attend meetings of the Council and its committees except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- Speak in the appropriate part of Council and committee meetings;
- Film, photograph or make an audio recording of the meeting for the benefit of those not attending, providing it is not disruptive.
- Present a petition to the Council;
- Complain about any aspect of the Council's services. (If a complaint in the usual way does not bring satisfaction, the Council has a formal Complaints procedure);
- Complain to the Cheshire East Council's Monitoring Officer if they have evidence which shows that a Councillor has not followed the Council's Code of Conduct;
- Inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external Auditor who checks the Council's financial management and expenditure.
- View and in most cases obtain copies of documents set out in the Council's publication scheme.

The Council welcomes participation by its citizens in its work and welcomes interested people at its meetings.

ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF ALL COUNCILLORS
All Councillors, whatever their formal position on the council, share common roles and responsibilities.
(a)Key Roles
All Councillors will:
- collectively be the ultimate decision makers;
- represent their communities and bring their views into the council's decision-making process;
- contribute to the good governance of the area and can encourage community participation decision making;
- balance different interests identified within the ward and represent the ward as a whole;
- participate in the governance and management of the council;

• **maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics.**

(b)Rights and Duties

• **Councillors will have such rights of access to such documents, information, land, and buildings of the council as are necessary for the proper discharge of their functions and in accordance with the law.**
• **Councillors will not disclose information which is confidential or exempt without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Councillor or officer entitled to know it.**
• **Unless specifically authorised to do so by the Council or a committee, a Member of the Council shall not issue any order respecting any works which are being carried out by or on behalf of the Council.**

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE MAYOR

• **The Mayor has a statutory role and that is to chair meetings of full Council. In doing so, will promote political neutrality.**
• **The Mayor will have a key role in promoting the town and will act as the Town Council's representative at official events.**
• **The Mayor will be elected from amongst the Councils members by full Council at its Annual Meeting and holds office for a year.**

DEPUTY MAYOR

• **The Council appoint a Deputy Mayor at the time the Mayor is elected, who shall assume the role of the Mayor when the Mayor is not present, or unable to fulfil that function.**

VERSION CONTROL	
Previous Version Approval date	10th May 2018
Current Version FAP Review Date	
Current Version Approval Date	
Current Version Approval Reference	