



Blockley Parish Council

Blockley Parish Council Transparency Policy

Minute ref: 19.03.26.7.5

Background and Principles

As stewards of public funds, Blockley Parish Council is committed to upholding the highest standards of transparency and openness. These principles are integral to all Council activities and democratic leadership.

The Council recognises the importance of making financial and administrative information easily accessible to electors, enabling the community to hold the Council accountable and contribute to local decision-making.

This policy sets out how the Council complies with the statutory requirements of the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities, as introduced by the government and supported by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

Introduction

This policy sets out Blockley Parish Council's commitment to openness, accountability, and transparency in its operations and financial management.

While the Council's annual turnover falls within the £25,000 to £200,000 bracket, meaning it is not legally bound by either the Transparency Code for Smaller Authorities (under £25,000) or the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (over £200,000), the Council has resolved to adopt the principles of the Smaller Authorities Code as best practice, in line with guidance from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

Information to be Published

The Council will publish the following information on its website (www.blockleyparish.gov.uk) to ensure residents can scrutinise its activities and financial management. All annual financial information will be published not later than 1 July in the year immediately following the accounting year to which it relates.

Financial and Audit Information

- **All items of expenditure above £100:** Published annually, including the date, purpose, amount, and VAT.
- **End of Year Accounts:** The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), including the Accounting Statements and the Annual Governance Statement. This will include an explanation of any significant variances (e.g., more than 10-15%) in the statement of accounts between the relevant year and the previous year, and an explanation of any differences between balances carried forward and total cash and short-term investments.
- **Internal Audit Report:** Published alongside the AGAR.
- **External Auditor's Report:** As the Council's turnover exceeds £25,000, it cannot declare itself exempt from a limited assurance review. The final report from the external auditor will be published upon receipt.
- **Notice of Public Rights:** The statutory notice detailing the period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the accounts, as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.
- **Bank Reconciliations:** Published periodically to demonstrate financial oversight.
- **List of Councillor Responsibilities:** Including committee memberships and representation on external bodies.
- **Details of Public Land and Building Assets:** An asset register detailing all land and buildings owned or leased by the Council. For each asset, this will include: description (what it is, including size/acreage), location,

owner/custodian, date of acquisition, cost of acquisition (or proxy value), and present use.

Governance and Meeting Information

- **Agendas and Associated Meeting Papers:** Published at least three clear days before a meeting of the full Council or its committees.
- **Minutes:** Draft minutes published no later than one month after the meeting has taken place.
- **Policies and Procedures:** Including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, and the Code of Conduct.

Public Procurement and Contracts

In accordance with the Procurement Act 2023 and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (as amended), the Council is committed to transparent procurement processes:

- Details of any contract opportunities and awards exceeding the relevant threshold (currently £30,000 for sub-central authorities) will be published on the government's Contracts Finder portal and on the Council's website.

All procurement will be conducted in accordance with the Council's adopted Financial Regulations.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

This Transparency Policy works in conjunction with the Council's obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, further information is in our Freedom of Information Policy

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Council to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation and best practice guidance.

Adopted: 19.03.26 Next Review: April 2027