

# **Hurworth Parish Council**

## **Procedure 23**

### **Freedom Of Information Vetting Procedure**

**30<sup>th</sup> April 2013**

#### **1. Objective**

- To ensure that HPC always remains totally transparent
- To put in place a procedure to study, consider and respond to FoI requests.
- To create a vetting process to ensure responses to FoI enquiries are accurate, and meet the Acts criteria.
- To ensure that the identity of the enquirer is established
- To respond in the statutory 20 day time scale
- To charge a fee and recover costs, when outside work is necessitated.

#### **2. The Vetting Committee**

The committee shall be made up of the current and immediate past Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Four councillors in total.

#### **3. The Process**

- Incoming FoI enquiries will be put into a register, with appropriate dates, and subject title.. The actual request will be stored in the HPC records – designated folder on the main data storage.
- The Clerk will circulate a copy of the FoI to the four Vetting Committee members.
- The Clerk may be asked to insert suggested responses to the questions, using the information held by the council.
- The Vetting Committee will review the questions and answers, and modify as appropriate, prior to confirming the content of the response.
- An official response will be send within the 20 day period.

#### **4. Additional Procedures**

The council will work within the confines and regulations of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and take special heed of Sections 14 and 40, to ensure there is no conflict with the Data Protection Act.

The council should take advice from DBC Legal Department and ICO if there is any doubt regarding the content or wording of responses.

The council has the right to refuse to answer any FoI requests, if it is regarded as being contrary to the accepted conditions of Section 14 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This is a decision which can be taken by the parish council.