

**HORTICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000
PUBLICATION SCHEME**

Effective from: 30 November 2002

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1 - Introduction

1. The Horticultural Development Council (HDC) is a Non Departmental Public Body, established under the Industrial Organisation and Development Act 1947 by the Horticultural Development Council Order 1986 (as amended). Its sponsoring Government Department is the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The HDC has responsibility for commissioning Research and Development and disseminating the results for the Horticultural Industry.
2. The Council conducts its dealings with the public in an open and responsible way and maintains openness as one of its core values. We aim to work openly, honestly and with integrity, and to share information with our stakeholders and where appropriate members of the public. In furthering this aim we have for some years complied with the voluntary Code of Practice on Access to Government Information (the Code), through which we have regularly made available information we hold to members of the public.
3. To meet our goal of increased openness and transparency, and to comply with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA 2000), we have designed this publication scheme to facilitate access to an extensive range of information collected, held and used by the Council.
4. The Freedom of Information Act (FOI Act) received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. It creates a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. The HDC is a public authority under the FOI Act and is therefore bound by their provisions.
5. The HDC, along with every other public authority from November 2002, has a legal duty under Section 19 of the FOI Act to:
 - adopt and maintain a scheme which relates to the publication of information by the authority and to have that scheme approved by the Information Commissioner;
 - publish information in accordance with that scheme; and
 - review the scheme from time to time.
6. In accordance with our requirements under the FOI Act, we have compiled this Publication Scheme to facilitate your access to an extensive range of information collected, used, published and held by the HDC. Our Publication Scheme sets out:
 - the classes of information which the public authority publishes (or intends to publish);
 - the manner in which information in each class is, (or is intended to be), published and;
 - whether the material is (or is intended to be) available free of charge or on payment of a fee.

7. From January 2005, you will have a statutory right under the Act to make individual requests for information that is not already included within the Scheme. At the moment this right does not apply, but the HDC is still committed to taking a positive approach to openness and we will continue to comply with the Code and provide that information to you in accordance with the Code, where possible. We will monitor the requests that we get and update our Scheme where appropriate to include other information that is regularly requested.
8. We shall publish information in accordance with the scheme and shall monitor and review its operation. Please note:
 - We intend that this will be a living document, which will be modified and developed in the light of public comment and feedback.
 - Sometimes, we may still have to withhold information if we consider that it is necessary for reasons such as confidentiality, unwarranted invasion of privacy, commercial sensitivity, or for some other legitimate reason. When considering whether or not we have to withhold information, we will take into account the grounds listed in the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information and the Freedom of Information Act. We will also consider whether the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. In any event, if we do have to withhold information, we will explain why we have done so.
 - Our scheme is not retrospective, and we do not undertake to publish information held by the HDC which was generated before 30 November 2002, the date the scheme came into force.
 - Information retention periods can vary from class to class. If you have an enquiry about a specific information source, please write to:

The Freedom of Information Officer
Horticultural Development Council
Bradbourne House
East Malling
Kent ME19 6DZ

e-mail: info@hdc.org.uk

9. The classes of information we publish are specified in section 5 of this Scheme. The classes are based on the type of information we publish. We have grouped similar materials together for ease of reference.
10. Information included in the scheme will generally be made available on the HDC website. Where publications are available in hard copy form or from another organisation, users will be clearly guided to the source of the information.

2 - How to obtain Information

1. At present the HDC publishes large volumes of information on its website, which will shortly also include forms, guidance notes and explanatory material. For the most up to date information on the work of the HDC, please visit our website at www.hdc.org.uk. However, we have provided details of how to access any of the individual items listed within the Scheme alongside the items listed in the classes. When information is not available online or where you would prefer to receive a hard copy of a document, we have included details of where such a request should be sent below.
2. Where we have not listed information in Section 5 of the Scheme, you may still send a request to us to disclose it to you. Until January 2005, this right to request information will be dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Code. From January 2005, the Act grants you a legal right to request the information. As noted above, even though we are therefore not legally obliged to provide information not included within the Scheme until January 2005, we are happy to provide further information to you where we are able to do so, where we are permitted to do so under our relevant information requirements and where it is suitable.
3. Therefore, if you have any requests for information that you think we might be able to provide, please include the following details in your request:
 - Your name and address
 - The information or documents you would like to access
 - The way you would like the information to be sent to you, eg as hard copy, via e-mail or on a computer disk, or for you to have the opportunity to inspect the information itself or be provided with a summary of that information.
4. Request for information should be sent by letter, fax or e-mail:
 - Letter – to The Freedom of Information Officer, HDC, Bradbourne House, East Malling, Kent ME19 6DZ
 - Fax – for the attention of The Freedom of Information Officer, on 01732 848498
 - e mail – on the subject line please state “Publication Scheme Information Request” and send to info@hdc.org.uk

3 - Charges

1. As far as possible, we shall aim to make information available free of charge. The exceptions will be where substantial resources are required to respond to a request.
2. Documents on the HDC website can be downloaded free of charge i.e. there is no charge by us, but the user will have to meet any charges by their Internet service provider, personal printing costs, etc. For those without Internet access, a single printout as on the website will be available by post from the HDC office. However, requests for multiple print outs or for archived copies of documents which are no longer available, may attract a charge for the cost of retrieval, photocopying, postage etc. We will let you know this at the time of your request. Any charge will be payable in advance.
3. The Council's policy is that fees will only be charged where a request for information requires additional work to that necessary for the fair and accountable performance of HDC's functions.

4 - Copyright

Subject to any third party rights all publications, the documents listed in the scheme and other information provided belong to the Council.

No part of the information may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the HDC.

Whilst information issued under the auspices of the HDC are prepared from the best available information, neither the authors or the HDC can accept any responsibility for inaccuracy or liability for loss, damage or injury from the application of any concept or procedure discussed.

5 - Classes of Information

In order to help you find the information you want we have organised the classes of information available from the HDC under the following broad categories

Role, Function and Structure

Class	Statutory Duties
Description	The HDC's statutory duties are contained within the Industrial Organisation and Development Act 1947 and Horticultural Development Council Order 1986 and amendments 1990, 1992, 2000 and 2002.
Availability	HMSO website at www.hmso.gov.uk
Charges where applicable	Current HMSO prices

Class	Overview of the HDC
Description	General information about the HDC, its function and activities
Availability	HDC website at www.hdc.org.uk
Charges where applicable	Free

Class	Organisation of the HDC
Description	Details of Members of the Council and Council Staff
Availability	HDC website at www.hdc.org.uk
Charges where applicable	Free

Class	Current Levy arrangements
Description	Information about the current levy arrangements
Availability	HDC website at www.hdc.org.uk
Charges where applicable	Free

Class	HDC Panel Structure
Description	Details of Members of the Sector Panels and staff responsible
Availability	HDC website at www.hdc.org.uk
Charges where applicable	Free

Policy, aims and objectives

Class	Aims, objectives and strategies
Description	The current aim, objectives and strategies of the HDC are set out in the Corporate plan and annual updates.
Availability	Hard copy It is intended to publish the corporate plan on the website during 2003.
Charges where applicable	Free

Class	Performance Targets
Description	The performance targets are set out in the Corporate plan and annual updates.
Availability	Hard copy It is intended to publish the corporate plan on the website during 2003.
Charges where applicable	Free

Class	Performance against targets
Description	Information about the HDC's performance against current targets is published in the Annual Report
Availability	Hard copy It is intended to publish the Annual Report on the website during 2003.
Charges where applicable	Free

Class	Research strategies
Description	Details the HDC's current research strategies and area of interest
Availability	Hard copy
Charges where applicable	Free

Class	Complaints procedure
Description	The procedure for making and handling complaints and appeals relating to the functions of the HDC. Information on target times for determining complaints.
Availability	Hard copy It is intended to publish the complaints procedure on the website during 2003.
Charges where applicable	Free

Corporate Governance

Class	Annual Report
Description	Details of the Council's activities, committees, members and policies. Performance review and Financial statements
Availability	Hard copy It is intended to publish the Annual Report on the website during 2003.
Charges where applicable	Free

News Releases

Class	HDC News releases
Description	Details of news releases on the activities of the Council.
Availability	HDC website at www.hdc.org.uk
Charges where applicable	Free