



Request

1. A copy of (or extract from) your current policy that governs user authentication for citizen-facing online services.
2. The specific password rules that apply when citizens create an account or perform a password reset. For example, password character minimum and maximum limits, special character enforcement.
3. Whether MFA is offered or required for citizen-facing services, and, if so, what types are supported (e.g. SMS, email, or authenticator app).
4. A brief description or document outlining how password resets or account recovery are handled for public users (e.g. email verification, security questions, or other processes).
5. The date these policies were last reviewed or updated, and whether the policies align with any national or international guidance (e.g. NCSC, NIST SP 800-63, or ISO 27001).

Response

The Council confirms that it holds this information. However, the information you are requesting is being withheld from disclosure. Section 31(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) states that information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

Disclosure under the FoIA is deemed to be disclosure to the world at large, i.e. placing it in the public domain. Disclosure of the requested information to the public would be valuable information to potential cyber criminals allowing them to identify the security framework and to identify possible weaknesses in cyber security processes.

This exemption is subject to a Public Interest Test. Whilst the Council acknowledges the inherent public interest in transparency in its activities, it believes in this case the public interest in protecting the personal and sensitive data held on its systems is of more significance. Furthermore, the cost to the public purse of responding to cyber attacks adds to the balance of arguments against disclosure. Taking these factors into consideration, the Council assesses the public interest is not in favour of disclosure.