

London Borough of Barnet,
2 Bristol Avenue,
Colindale, NW9 4EW
23 January 2026
Our ref: 16167875

Thank you for your request received on 23 December 2025, for the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act/Environmental Information Regulations please could you respond to the requests below. For your convenience I have provided the context (Parts A & B) behind this request (Part C).

Context:

(A) Engage Barnet portal moved to a new location

Since around November 2025, Engage Barnet consultations ceased to be listed under engage.barnet.gov.uk, instead they moved to barnet.gov.uk/engage (although now the old URL migrates users to the new one). The previous portal provided access to consultations dating back to 2019, but the new one only publishes information for around 1 year. The move was announced in the 29 October 2025 edition of Barnet First but readers were not informed that 5 years of consultation information would disappear.

(B) Document/record retention policy

Barnet Council's document/record retention policy can be obtained here: <https://open.barnet.gov.uk/dataset/barnet-council-retention-schedule-vdwrn>.

Some extracts are as follows:

- 'Management of routine responses on council actions, policy, or procedures' (e.g. FOIs etc): 5-year retention period (Page 22);
- 'Town Centre Management' (e.g. Town Centre Projects engagement and communications): 1-year retention from close of project (Page 39);
- 'Regeneration/project management' (e.g. community engagement not related to capital delivery): 10-year retention (Page 41).

The document does not refer to webpage retention, there is a clearly thematic similarity between it and the policy (which includes many 6 year retention periods, which could be used as a steer to determine what to do with Engage Barnet).

(C) FOI requests/queries

(1) Please provide a copy (or link to) the policy (or rationale behind) the decision not to transfer substantially all the consultation pages from the old website to the new one.

By doing so, I would expect that Barnet Council owns the copyright to the old webpages (and there should be no barrier to republishing them).

Caring for people, places and the planet

(2) Does Barnet Council plan to republish older consultation pages on the new site and if so, what basis do you propose to use as a retention period from closing date of a consultation?

NB: As a minimum, it would be reasonable for consultations that closed in late December 2019 to be available as at late December 2025 (i.e. retention period of 6 years).

(i) Democracy & Public Interest: The Committee for Standards in Public Life's 'Early Warning Signs' report (March 2025) page 4 states: 'Making information available about what an organisation does and how it does it enables the public ... to scrutinise its performance...' (see:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recognising-and-responding-to-early-warning-signs-in-public-sector-bodies-report>).

(ii) Continuity of memory, discovery efficiency and fairness: the full life cycle of a decision for which a consultation was required (proposal, community views, council's considerations and the weblink to the final decision) should be transparent and easy to find. The best discovery route is often the consultation portal - it is not necessarily:

- Barnet First is too 'current';

- Meetings calendar/committee pages imply a decision has been made, which is not always the case, and even if it is, committee names (and associated URIs) change over time so events can be difficult to trace;

- Open Data portal is very useful but potentially overwhelming.

It is not fair to burden residents with the task of mining the wrong sources, when retaining historic Engage Barnet content is the simplest thing to do.

(iii) 3rd party accountability: Nolan Principles apply to third party service providers to Public Bodies, therefore where they facilitate consultations, their involvement should be transparent for as long as their role is relevant.

We have processed this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Response

The council holds the information requested and it is attached/ the answers to your questions are below

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The council's web team's standard advice for services is that content older than a year should not be published on the council's website so in the main we have followed that advice.

The old website, previously hosted by an external provider Granicus, and its accompanying pages does not exist anymore. As soon as our contract ended with Granicus the website URL and its content ceased to exist too. However, we have all the consultation content that was published on the old website on file.

(2) Does Barnet Council plan to republish older consultation pages on the new site and if so, what basis do you propose to use as a retention period from closing date of a consultation?

NB: As a minimum, it would be reasonable for consultations that closed in late December 2019 to be available as at late December 2025 (i.e. retention period of 6 years).

We don't plan to re publish any of the older consultations, however any consultations older than a year and are still awaiting feedback have been published on the new Engage Barnet web pages; once the feedback is ready, we will be publishing the accompanying feedback on those particular consultation pages.

Also, please note, in terms of Highways Consultations, due to the length of time and the various consultation stages involved in Highways consultations before a final decision is made, we took the decisions to publish all Highway consultations dating back to 2019.

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[Put the answers/response against the questions/request above, or say the information is attached etc

Make sure you have answered all the questions asked/provided all the info requested

Make sure the info given actually answers the questions asked!

if you do not hold some/all the information or you are withholding any of it DO NOT use this template- choose the most appropriate one from the drop down in iCasework. You will need to 'uncomplete' the 'complete response' task to do this, ask R&IMT if you are not sure how.

Does this response need to be cleared by communications? Is it from the press/bloggers/ a current contentious topic? Link Officers need to obtain this and alert R&IMT to any delays. If you are an outsourced delivery unit please get press clearance before sending to R&IMT to send out and note in the case that press clearance has been obtained. Thank you

Remember that R&IMT will review your response before sending it out (outsourced delivery units) or before publication (retained delivery units) so spending time now perfecting your response will save you time in the long run and may avoid an Internal Review!]

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Records & Information Management Service, Assurance Group, London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.