



BEDFORDSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY

Ethical Governance

REFERENCE NUMBER : **BPA 03**
RELATES TO PROCEDURE NO :
NEW or REVISED POLICY : **Revised**
Revises Policy Titled :
Revision History : **November 2009**
POLICY OWNER (Dept) : **Bedfordshire Police Authority**
POLICY AUTHOR (Job Title) : **Chief Executive**
IMPLEMENTATION DATE : **1st July 2007**
REVIEW DATE : **July 2011**

1. POLICY OBJECTIVE

- 1.1** The authority is community focussed embracing objectivity, fairness and diversity, exercising proper stewardship and objectivity in its decision making.
- 1.2** The basis of all working is Honesty, Openness, Transparency, Trust and Respect for others. Officers and Members uphold the law and act with integrity in line with the Ten General Principles of Public Life (attached as appendix A.)
- 1.3** There is recognition by Members and Officers of their individual and corporate responsibility to promote and encourage high standards of conduct throughout the Authority.
- 1.4** Accountability is clear through established procedures with appropriate and open communication channels adopted and followed wherever possible.
- 1.5** There is a public confidence that the Authority acts and is seen to act with integrity.
- 1.6** Processes exist to record and deal appropriately with any situation of ambiguity or conflict that may arise.
- 1.7** The ethical framework is annually reviewed by the Standards Committee for its implementation and operation and aim of continuous improvement.

POLICY STATEMENT

2. Background

2.1 The Bedfordshire Police Authority provides a leadership role and focus for the communities of Bedfordshire, including Luton in relation to their policing service. Sitting with this is a responsibility to manage the affairs of the Authority through sound ethical governance principles, procedures and practices.

2.2 The ethical reputation of both the Authority and Force depends on the standards of conduct associated with Members, staff, officers and their agents. This document sets out the ethical standards required and details of the arrangements in place to achieve and monitor delivery of those standards.

2.3 **Definitions:** For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions are used:-

Governance- *Governance comprises systems and processes for the direction and control of the Authority through which it engages with, leads and accounts to its local community and other stakeholders.*

Ethical conduct- *Displaying integrity, accountability and honesty with clear objectives aimed at public good.*

2.4 Ethical Governance is concerned therefore with the standards of conduct of all holders of public office whether Members or officers of the Authority. It is also concerned with the policies and procedures in place to facilitate and monitor ethical conduct.

2.5 Ethical Governance of the Authority is part of its overall Corporate Governance. It sits together with other inter-related policies and procedures such as the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy providing the framework which underpins the sound and proper management of the Authority.

2.6 Ethical policies, procedures and conduct within the Authority are seen as affecting both individual and wider corporate responsibilities, relevant not only to personal conduct but also the operation of the Authority.

2.7 This Policy gives an overall guide to Members and Officers on how they are expected to conduct themselves when carrying out duties and responsibilities associated with the work of the Bedfordshire Police Authority. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the supporting procedures published by the Authority and referenced within this document.

3. Ethical Vision

3.1 Structure and process, whilst providing essential guidance and form to the ethical arrangements of the Authority, are only part of what is necessary to provide sound ethical governance.

3.2 The underpinning organisational ethical culture and values within which Members and officers of the Authority work will equally influence the ultimate outcomes.

3.3 Organisational Ethical Values-forming the ethical vision are:

- The authority is community focussed embracing objectivity, fairness and diversity, exercising proper stewardship and objectivity in its decision making:
- The basis of all working is Honesty, Openness, Transparency, Trust and Respect for others. Officers and Members uphold the law and act with integrity in line with the Ten General Principles of Public Life (attached as appendix A.)
- There is recognition by Members and Officers of their individual and corporate responsibility to promote and encourage high standards of conduct throughout the Authority.
- Accountability is clear through established procedures with appropriate and open communication channels adopted and followed wherever possible.
- There is a public confidence that the Authority acts and it is seen to act with integrity.
- Processes exist to record and deal appropriately with any situation of ambiguity or conflict that may arise.
- The ethical framework is annually reviewed by the Standards Committee for its implementation and operation and aim of continuous improvement.

3.4 The vision that the Authority has developed with the Force through its strategic planning reflects these qualities;

‘Our vision is to be an organisation that inspires trust and confidence, that listens, responds and meets the needs of individuals and communities.’

4. Organisational Management

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities: The Authority abides by legislative requirements related to ethical conduct such as the Freedom of Information Acts. It also has a range of documented and well understood internally defined roles and responsibilities established for the Authority, individual Members, staff, agents,

contractors and the Force. These arrangements are clearly documented to ensure consistency of practice. Examples are:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Committee Terms of Reference
- Committee Chair Role descriptions
- Equality and Diversity Policy/Procedure
- Confidential Reporting Procedure

4.2 Engaging Stakeholders is a strategic and operational priority for the Authority. It is conducted through consultation on such things as policy development, policy decision making, policy implementation, monitoring, review and reporting. Examples are:

- Community Engagement Committee
- Performance Committee
- Council Tax Consultation
- **Partnership strategy and working**
- Citizens panel
- **Police Authority Engagement Plan**

4.3 Transparent Decision Making is managed through a 'confidentiality policy' of being as open as possible in respect of all dealings, subject to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so in line with legislative or policing requirements.

4.4 Purpose and Planned Outcomes are clearly articulated within published documents. Performance against such targets and standards are monitored for effectiveness through public documents at open meetings. Examples of such documents and meetings are:

- Three year Strategic Plan
- Annual Budget
- **Annual Policing Plan and associated outcomes**

- **Annual Governance Statement**
- Performance Committee
- Audit and Business Assurance Committee

5. Systems and Processes

- 5.1** The Authority operates to documented, well understood, appropriate and current systems and processes which contain controls to establish and monitor ethical conduct.
- 5.2** The range of such systems and processes is extensive and covers both the Authority and Force. Examples are:
- Human Resources Handbook
 - Financial Instructions Handbook
 - Anti-Fraud and Corruption Procedure
 - Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy/Procedure
 - Declaration of Interests Register
 - Registers of Hospitality and Gifts
 - Procurement Policy
 - Members Handbook

6. Standards of Conduct

- 6.1** A cornerstone in achieving the highest possible standards of openness, integrity and accountability from both Members and Officers is to have clear, documented, communicated and understood standards of conduct in place.
- 6.2** Policies and Procedures supporting the clarity and monitoring of ethical conduct are based on national and local standards that span both the Authority and Force. Examples are:
- Members Code of Conduct, including protocols
 - Staff Code of Conduct
 - Personal Interests - Members

- Conditions of Service
- **Vetting Policy / Procedure**

7. Monitoring

7.1 The effective monitoring of the arrangements for Ethical governance and Ethical Performance sits internally across all the Authority's activities and externally through a range of inspection regimes. Examples are:

- Authority Standards Committee
- Complaints and Professional Standards Committee
- Audit and Business Assurance Committee
- Internal and External Audit
- Related Party Returns
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies.

7.2 Reports emanating from inspectorates are channelled through the Authority's committee process that is normally open to the public and press. Resulting action plans are monitored for delivery through the same process.

8. Summary

8.1 The Authority strives to maintain the policies, procedures and organisational culture to deliver, support and monitor good ethical governance and exemplary ethical performance across the organisation.

8.2 The levels of actual performance against this policy are monitored regularly both internally and externally and the results made public.

8.3 Individual supporting policies and procedures are monitored on a regular basis to ensure they are current and appropriate to the task.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT ASSESSMENT

This policy is suitable for access by the General Public

Freedom of Information Officer Signature :

RATIFICATION BY Police Authority

Date:

Equality Impact Assessed

Date:

The Ten General Principles of Public Life

Selflessness – members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.

Honesty and integrity – members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

Objectivity – members should make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

Accountability – members should be accountable to the public for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular office.

Openness – members should be as open as possible about their actions and those of their authority, and should be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

Personal judgement – members may take account of the views of others, including their political groups, but should reach their own conclusions on the issues before them and act in accordance with those conclusions.

Respect for others – members should promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. They should respect the impartiality and integrity of the authority's statutory officers and its other employees.

Duty to uphold the law – members should uphold the law and, on all occasions, act in accordance with the trust that the public is entitled to place in them.

Stewardship – members should do whatever they are able to do to ensure that their authorities use their resources prudently, and in accordance with the law.

Leadership – members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.