



# Bedfordshire Police Authority

## **GUIDANCE FOR WORKING TOGETHER**

The Lead Members Scheme enables the Police Authority to make good use of resources by requiring individual Members to give particular attention and develop an in depth knowledge of a specific portfolio linked to a strategic priority. This focused area of work contributes towards the Member Development Plan agreed during the Annual Performance Development Review with the Chair and assists with succession planning within the Authority. To gain maximum benefit Lead Members will need to be a member of the committee that relates to their area of responsibility. This will strengthen the ability of committees to effectively challenge and scrutinise from a position of knowledge, understanding and influence. It will also enable Committees to support improvement drives and value for money proposals brought by the Force.

### **Confidentiality**

The Guidance for Working Together for the Lead Members Scheme is aligned with the Protocol Governing the Relationship between the Police Authority and Bedfordshire Police.

Access to all information and areas of work will be given to all local members unless there is a genuine operational need for confidentiality.

Member involvement will be conducted in a spirit of openness and transparency. However some areas of policing may deal with issues of confidentiality. When members are part of a discussion of issues which are confidential, they will be advised as such by the Force.

Members will take account of data protection principles, particularly if exposed to personal information through their Lead Member activity.

### **Media**

The media protocol should be adhered to at all times.

### **Matters of Concern**

Member concerns resulting from meeting with their point of contact or 'reality checking' can be raised:

- with the Chief officer for the area or theme. To take into account the operational responsibilities faced by Officers, Members should be prepared to receive their response within 7 working days.
- in a Police Authority Committee agenda setting meeting
- with the Chair of a relevant committee and if appropriate discussed at the monthly Chairs meeting
- by requesting report be prepared for Committee consideration/debate

Where the Lead Member remains dissatisfied, the issue should be raised with the Chair of the Police Authority and where appropriate the Chair will take the issue to the Chair-Chief Constable meeting.

Members will always ensure that where concerns are raised, informally or formally, they should be recorded in a summary email following a verbal discussion or in a report from the Lead Member.

### **Community Concerns**

Lead Members should contact the Force at any reasonable time where there is an urgent query. The Force contact will brief the relevant Chief Officer as soon as is possible. If a query cannot be resolved then the Lead Member should highlight the issue to the Chair of the relevant Committee.

Where the action of the member or the Force point of contact is deemed to be inappropriate by either party this should be brought to the attention of the Chief Executive and relevant Chief Officer for resolution. In the unlikely event that the matter cannot be resolved it will be referred to the Chair of the Police Authority and Chief Constable.

### **External Forums**

The keys to relationships between Authority members and the Force are openness and transparency. The Authority and the Force work together towards achieving the objectives in the Policing Plan. However inevitably there are occasions when the method of achieving those objectives may not be agreed.

That disagreement must be handled sensitively, particularly when third parties are present, be it at an Authority meeting in front of press/public or, for example, in the context of a Community Safety Partnerships. However the Authority must be seen to be acting to improve policing without potentially undermining public confidence in the longer term as this is not likely to be conducive to more effective and efficient policing.

The responsibility for exchanging information lies with both parties. Individual Authority members should contact the Force (1) when they have a query, (2) when they are about to attend non Authority meetings particularly where both will be represented. The Force should then make the Authority member aware of any significant issues likely to arise and generally should respond fully and promptly, bearing in mind that any failure to respond could mean the Authority member is unable to support the Force's position. The Force should warn members of any issues which are likely to prove controversial and about which members are likely to be asked in their role as community advocates.