

Freedom of Information Act 2000

BEDFORDSHIRE PUBLICATION SCHEME

Introduction

Bedfordshire Police Authority Publication Scheme

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 received Royal Assent on 30 November 2000. It gives 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. A 'public authority' is defined in the Act, and includes but is not restricted to central and local government, non-departmental public bodies, the police, police authorities, the health service and schools, colleges and universities. Any person who makes a request to a public authority for information must be informed whether the public authority holds that information and, subject to exemptions, supplied with that information.

Your rights and our responsibilities from June 2003

Under the FOI Act all police authorities including Bedfordshire Police Authority must have a Publication Scheme setting out the information we routinely make publicly available. Our scheme must be approved by the Information Commissioner and we have to review the scheme from time to time. In adopting (or reviewing) our Publication Scheme, we are required to have regard to the public interest in:

- allowing public access to information we hold; and
- to the publication of reasons for the decisions we make.

Our publication scheme must:

- set out the classes of information which we publish or intend to publish;
- say how we will publish the information in each class; and
- say if we will provide the information free or charge for it.

The purpose of our Publication Scheme is to let you know what information is readily available from us without your needing to ask us for it. By readily available we mean that the information is available on our website; can be obtained from us if you request it by letter, e-mail or telephone call; can be purchased from us; or can be found in a local library.

Part 2 of our Publication Scheme sets out the classes or types of information that we publish or intend to publish, how they can be obtained and whether they are free or if we will ask you to pay a charge.

Your rights and our responsibilities from 1st January 2005

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 gives you a right of access to recorded information held by public authorities, subject to certain exemptions.

The FOI Act applies to the vast majority of public authorities, including Bedfordshire Police Authority. Since the FOI Act came into force on 1 January 2005, if you ask us for information we are required to:

- let you know in writing whether we hold information you have asked for; and
- if we do, provide the information to you within 20 working days, unless it is subject to an exemption.

We also have a duty to provide advice or assistance to you or anyone seeking information (for example in order to explain what is readily available or to clarify what is wanted).

Full access rights under the Freedom of Information Act came into force on **1 January 2005**.

The Introduction of further Orders/Regulations on 1st March 2006 have provided simpler, clearer rules about circumstances under which the public may be excluded from access to certain kinds of information. The Authority has regard to these provisions when approached for information that may be exempt or confidential.

Responsibilities for the Bedfordshire Police Authority Publication Scheme

The Chief Executive / Treasurer of Bedfordshire Police Authority has overall responsibility for our Publication Scheme.

The person responsible for maintaining and managing the Publication Scheme is:

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Janet Wardell, Member Services Support Manager
Bedfordshire Police Authority
Address: Bridgebury House
Woburn Road
Kempston
MK43 9AX
Telephone: 01234 842066
Fax: 01234 842068
E-mail: info@bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

Contacting Bedfordshire Police Authority

If you wish to obtain a hard copy of our Publication Scheme or any of our publications, you may write to, e-mail or telephone us at:

Bedfordshire Police Authority
Bridgebury House
Woburn Road
Kempston
MK43 9AX
Telephone: 01234 842066
Fax: 01234 842068
E-mail: info@bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

Our website also contains a copy of the Publication Scheme at www.bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

Charging for Publications

In Part 2, we indicate for each class of information whether the class includes chargeable information or not.

Free of charge on website — there is no charge made by us, although the user will, of course, have to meet any charges made by their Internet service provider and/or telephone company as well as any personal costs for printing, photocopying etc.

For those without access to the Internet, we will provide a single printout of an individual publication, as shown on the website, free of charge from the above contact address.

Chargeable on website — requests for multiple copies of publications or multiple printouts from our website or for copies of archived material no longer available on the website will attract a charge. The cost will be restricted to 10% of the reasonable marginal costs of complying with the request, together with photocopying costs (currently 10 pence per sheet) and postage. We will let you know the cost when we receive your request. The charge will be payable in advance.

Where the information is available via the website but a value-added service is requested using that information, a charge will be made.

Free of charge hard copy — indicates a leaflet, booklet or periodical which is published by Bedfordshire Police Authority without charge.

Chargeable hard copy — indicates a bound paper copy, cassette or other product charged as shown in our publication list.

Where a charge applies, the cost and the reasons for levying such a charge will be made known to you. Any charge will be payable in advance.

Comments about the Publication Scheme

If you have any comments on our Publication Scheme or feel that the Scheme could be improved, you should write, in the first instance to:

Janet Wardell, Member Services Support Manager
Bedfordshire Police Authority
Address: Bridgebury House
Woburn Road
Kempston
MK43 9AX
Telephone: 01234 842066
Fax: 01234 842068
E-mail: info@bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

Complaints about the Publication Scheme

If you think we have not supplied information in accordance with our Scheme, then you should write, in the first instance, to:

Chief Executive/Treasurer
Bedfordshire Police Authority
Address: Bridgebury House
Woburn Road
Kempston
MK43 9AX
Telephone: 01234 842066
Fax: 01234 842068
E-mail: info@bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

We aim to deal with your complaint within 20 working days. If you are dissatisfied with the response you can ask for the matter to be internally reviewed. We aim to complete an internal review and respond to you within 20 working days.

If, after the internal review, you remain dissatisfied then you can complain to the Information Commissioner.

Review of the Bedfordshire Police Authority Publication Scheme

We will review and update our publication scheme biennially.

Availability of this scheme in other languages and formats.

You can obtain a copy of this scheme in large print and audio on request to the Police Authority. If you require and request a copy of this document in a language

other than English, the Police Authority will do its utmost to provide you with the translated document in practicable time-scales.

Copyright

Different bodies might own the copyright of material contained in our Scheme:

Bedfordshire Police Authority Copyright Material

For material where we own the copyright, it can be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium for research, private study or for internal circulation within an organisation. This is subject to the material being reproduced accurately and not being used in a misleading context. Where material is being republished or copied to others, the source of the material must be identified and our copyright acknowledged. The Bedfordshire Police Authority logo is also copyrighted and may not be reproduced other than as it appears on copied material.

Other Copyrighted Material

Some material we include in our Scheme may be the copyright of a third party. Our rights to hold and use such material do not extend to others. You must obtain authorisation from the copyright holder(s) concerned if you wish to copy or reproduce such material.

Requests for Personal Information

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, you already have a statutory right to have access to personal data we hold about you on computer or in a structured manual file (i.e. on paper). You also have the right to expect us, as the data controller, to ensure that data is:

- processed fairly and lawfully
- obtained for specific and lawful purposes
- adequate, relevant and not excessive
- accurate and where necessary kept up to date
- not kept for longer than is necessary
- processed in accordance with the rights of the data subject
- kept secure
- not transferred abroad unless to countries with adequate data protection laws.

For the purposes of the 1998 Act, “personal data” is information that relates to a living identifiable person. The person or organisation who controls the purpose and manner in which data is processed is the “data controller”. More information on the Data Protection Act can be found on the website of the Information Commissioner www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk or from the address given below.

Information where Bedfordshire Police Authority is the Data Controller

Where we are the data controller, you are entitled to be told whether we hold data about you, and if we do:

- to be given a description of the data in question
- to be told for what purposes the data is processed
- to be told the recipients, or classes of recipients, to whom the data is or may be disclosed

You are also entitled to a copy of the information with any unintelligible terms, acronyms or codes explained. You will also be given any information available to us on the source of the data. The data will be in its latest form.

If you wish to apply for access to your personal data, known as “a subject access request”, you should write to us at the above address. A fee of £10 must accompany your request together with proof of your identity. We also need to be supplied with the details needed to locate the information you seek. A request for access to personal data will be dealt with promptly and in any event within 40 days or receipt of the request and payment of the fee.

If you consider that a request by you for access to your personal data has not been dealt with properly, you may:

- write to us at the above address seeking resolution of your complaint.
- Contact the Information Commissioner, who is appointed to consider such complaints at:

Office of the Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow, Cheshire
SK9 5AF

The Information Commissioner is empowered to assess whether there has been a failure to comply with the 1998 Act. The Commissioner can issue enforcement proceedings if satisfied that there has been a contravention of the data protection principles. The Commissioner can also recommend that you apply to court alleging a failure to comply with the subject access provisions of the 1998 Act. The court may make an order requiring compliance with those provisions and may also award compensation for any damages you have suffered as well as any associated distress.

Information where Bedfordshire Police Authority is not the “Data Controller”

In many cases, it is the police and not the police authority who hold personal information. The Police National Computer includes information on prosecutions, convictions and cautions. Chief Officers of Police are the “data controllers” for this information and not Bedfordshire Police Authority.

You have the right to be told by a Chief Officer whether any information is held about you on the Police National Computer and a right to a copy of that information. The Chief Officer will give that information if he/she is satisfied as to your identity and on payment of a fee of £10. The Chief Officer may deny access to this information where the information is held for the prevention or detection of crime or for the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and where release of the information would be likely to be prejudicial to any of these purposes.

Police forces provide a form to simplify the exercise of your subject access rights to PNC information. In the case of Bedfordshire Police you should contact: -

Data Protection Officer:

Information Governance Unit
Bedfordshire Police HQ
Woburn Road
Kempston
Bedfordshire
MK43 9AX

Telephone:

01234 842547

Email:

DataProtection@bedfordshire.pnn.police.uk

Requests under the Environmental Information Regulations

If you wish to make a request for information under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), you should write to:

Janet Wardell, Member Services Support Services Manager

Bedfordshire Police Authority

Address: Bridgebury House

Woburn Road

Kempston

MK43 9AX

Telephone: 01234 842066

Fax: 01234 842068

E-mail: info@bedfordshirepoliceauthority.co.uk

General Information about Bedfordshire Police Authority

Bedfordshire Police Authority Role and Responsibilities

The Bedfordshire Police Authority is an independent body made up of local people. It is our job to ensure that there is an efficient and effective police force for Bedfordshire and to make sure that the Chief Constable and the Force are accountable to you in carrying out their responsibilities and serving our communities.

The Bedfordshire Police Authority sets the strategic direction for policing in Bedfordshire and holds the Chief Constable to account for the policing service delivered. Delivery of local policing services is the job of the chief constable.

We have a number of statutory duties and responsibilities. The main ones are to

- secure an efficient and effective local police force
- to hold the Chief Constable to account for the exercise of their functions
- hold the police budget and allocate resources
- appoint (and dismiss, if necessary) the chief constable and senior police officers
- consult widely with local people about the policing of their area
- set local policing priorities and targets for achievement
- monitor everything the police do and how well they perform against the targets set by the Authority
- publish a three year rolling policing plan which tells local people what they can expect from their police service and report on achievements every year
- makes sure local people get best value from their local police
- oversees complaints against the police and discipline of senior officers

It might help you to know that police operations are the responsibility of the Chief Constable and information on individuals is more likely to be held by the police than the police authority.

Classes of Information

Introduction

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, our Publication Scheme must say what classes, or broad types, of information the police authority already publishes or intends to publish. We aim to publish as much information as possible about our work through the scheme, except where it would not be in the public interest to do so, for example, because it might prejudice law enforcement or the health and safety of our staff, or our ability to secure best value from local policing because information is commercially sensitive.

For each class we briefly define the information contained in that class, the format in which it is available and whether the class includes chargeable material (chargeable material indicated by a “£” sign).

For those who do not have access to a computer, all information contained in this Publication Scheme (including the Scheme itself) is available in hard copy form.

Classes of Information:

1. Who we are and what we do
2. What we spend and how we spend it
3. What our priorities and how we are doing
4. How we make decisions
5. Our Policies and Procedures
6. Lists and Registers
7. Services we offer

Bedfordshire Police Authority publishes, or intends to publish, information under the following classes:

Freedom of Information

Publication Scheme

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Structure of the Authority*

- Role & statutory responsibilities
- Names of members of the Authority together with Members' profiles and contact details
- Appointment of Members
- Members Attendance Records
- Membership of Standards Committee
- Membership/Composition of the Selection Panel
- Governance (committee) structure
- Departmental structure (where appropriate)
- Independent Custody Visiting (including details of the scheme)

Staff Structure of the Authority

- Basic staff structure– including brief outline of responsibilities
- Contact details for those staff dealing with the public

Contact Information

- Contact details - where possible by name, or in certain cases departmental contact details
- Central contact point for general enquiries
- Geographical contacts – to include, where appropriate, specific Member links with parts of the force area.

Other Appointments

This section could include the details of the processes and policies adopted in terms of the following appointments:-

- Member appointments
- Independent Custody Visitor appointments (including memorandum of understanding and appointment & appeals procedure)
- Chief Officer appointments
- Other appointments standards committees, selection panel, Independent Advisory Group; Animal welfare etc)

Partnerships

The Police Authority is a responsible authority in terms of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and is therefore a co-signatory to the partnership plans in place for the CDRPs within their area. Here you will also find information about how the

* The term 'Authority' is used throughout, this to include 'Board' where that is appropriate

authority works with other statutory and voluntary partners. Partnership plans are available

WHAT WE SPEND AND HOW WE SPEND IT

Summary of revenue budget estimates of the Authority

Annual Statement of Accounts

Budgets set for the force

Expenses and allowances paid to Members (Note this does not include Staff)

- Members Allowances Scheme
- Allowances paid to Members

Annual Audit Letter

Financial Audit Reports

- To include the PURE report

Internal financial regulations and delegated authority

- Authority's financial regulations setting out clearly the appropriate authorisation process for expenditure

WHAT OUR PRIORITIES ARE AND HOW ARE WE DOING

Strategic Plan or Local Policing Objectives

- Policing Plan (including the Local Policing Summary)

Reports on service provision, performance assessments and operational assessments

All reports considered by public meetings of the Authority are available for public inspection.

Reports by external inspectors

- HMIC
- Audit Commission
- NPIA

Statistical information provided to the Authority

- Performance reports
- Statistical information on sickness absence; recruitment & staffing targets; secondments; grievance & employment tribunal cases

Police Authority self assessment process

- Details of the assessments made by the Authority against the APA's self assessment framework, including action plans developed to address areas of weakness

HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS

Schedule of meetings open to the public

- This will include not only the formal committees and sub-committees but the Authority's public consultation meetings

Agendas and approved minutes

Background papers for meetings open to the public

- To include any publicly available briefing notes
- Terms of reference of the Authority and its committees
- Standing orders

Facts & analyses of facts used for decision making

- Equality Impact Assessments

Public Consultations

- Agendas and newsletters for public consultation meetings
- Contact/Engagement strategy
- List of forthcoming public meetings

OUR POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Policies and procedures for the conduct of the Authority's business

- Standing Orders
- Terms of reference
- Authority Business Plan
- Ethical Governance Policy
- Members Code of Conduct
- Financial Regulations
- Delegation to Officers
- Officer/Member protocol
- Race Equality Scheme
- Diversity Equality Scheme
- Any other such scheme such as a Gender or general diversity scheme
- Health and Safety –
- Members PDR Scheme
- Members Training Scheme
- Lead Member Scheme

Policies and procedures for the provision of services

- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme – see charging for publications policy in the introduction to the scheme

Policies and procedures about the employment of staff

This section relates specifically to the employment of staff. Those other members and volunteers which the Authority appoints will come under the section at the start of the Scheme.

- Disciplinary & Grievance procedure

Customer Service

- Complaints procedure
 - against the actions of the Authority (organisational complaints)
 - about Members (through the local assessment of complaints framework) but also through the Ombudsman if not a Code of Conduct issue
 - about Staff
- Minimum standards for responding to requests for information

Records Management & Personal Data policies

- Information security policies
- Records retention policies
- Destruction & archive policies
- Data protection policies

LISTS & REGISTERS

Register of Members' Interests

Register of Gifts & Hospitality

FOI Act Disclosure Log

SERVICES WE OFFER

Information about the provision of the Authority's services

- Authority Business Plan and the Local Policing Summary

Leaflets & Explanatory booklets

- council tax leaflet, local policing summaries, advice leaflets and public briefing papers

Media Releases

Services for which the Authority is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees

