

BEDFORD GROUP OF DRAINAGE BOARDS

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

GOVERNANCE

Review date: April 2022

To be reviewed every 5 years

Next review date: April 2027

Reviewed by: Joint Management Committee

Adopted by:

Alconbury & Ellington Internal Drainage Board
Bedfordshire & River Ivel Internal Drainage Board
Buckingham & River Ouzel Internal Drainage Board

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”) gives a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities and sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public bodies. This Publication Scheme has been developed for non-departmental public bodies in conjunction with the Information Commissioner’s Office.

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1. What is and why does the Board use a publication scheme?

- 1.1. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (“the Act”), as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 and the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community Regulations 2009 (INSPIRE) gives a general right of access to and re-use of recorded information held by public authorities, sets out exemptions from those rights and places a number of obligations on public authorities. The Board is deemed to be a non-departmental public body for the purposes of the Act.
- 1.2. Further information about the Act can be obtained from the Information Commissioner’s Office (<https://www.ico.org.uk>).
- 1.3. The Board is required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme setting out the classes of information it holds, the manner in which it intends to publish the information, and whether a charge will be made for the information. The purpose of a Publication Scheme is to ensure a significant amount of information is available, without the need for a specific request. Schemes are intended to encourage organisations to publish more information proactively and to develop a greater culture of openness. This Publication Scheme has been developed for non-departmental public bodies in conjunction with the Information Commissioner’s Office.

2. What information is routinely available?

- 2.1. Information on who we are and what we do:
 - Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts
- 2.2. Information on what we spend and how we spend it:
 - Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, procurement, contracts and audited accounts
- 2.3. Information on what our priorities are and how we are doing:
 - Strategies and plans, value for money indicators, audits, inspections and reviews
- 2.4. How we make decisions:
 - Decision making processes and records of decisions
- 2.5. Information on policies and procedures:
 - Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities
- 2.6. Information on lists and registers:
 - All statutory and non-statutory registers (with personal information redacted)
- 2.7. The service we offer:
 - Information about the services we currently provide including leaflets, guidance and newsletters

3. How to access the information

3.1. The information referred to in 2.1. – 2.7. above may be accessed through a variety of means and in a number of formats where available. All information is available for inspection on request and by prior appointment; where appropriate copies can be made available. A charge may be applied for providing the information; each case is considered individually.

- Some information will be available on our website. This information is non-chargeable
- Information may be requested by e-mail to contact@idbs.org.uk with 'Freedom of Information Request' in the subject line
- Information may be requested by post to:
Chief Executive
Bedford Group of Drainage Boards
Vale House
Broadmead Road
Stewartby
Bedfordshire
MK43 9ND
Tel: +44 (0) 1234 767995
<https://www.idbs.org.uk>
Please note that where hard copies of information will normally be supplied upon request, multiple copies cannot normally be provided.
- Information may be requested in person at the Office by prior appointment only. Please refer to contact details above.

3.2. The Board will always endeavour to respond promptly and fully within 20 working days, as set out in the Freedom of Information Act.

3.3. Public Notices that we are required by law to advertise will always be published on our website, in addition to where the legislation may otherwise require us to publish each Notice. If the legislation gives us the flexibility to publish a Public Notice where we like, we shall always elect to publish the Notice on our website.

4. Exempt information and charges

4.1. Information is exempt if, and so long as in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. For example:

- Information relating to any individual
- Information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual

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- Information relating to the financial affairs or business affairs of any particular person (including the IDB or Bedford Group holding that information)
- Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any employee relations matter arising between the IDB or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the IDB or the Bedford Group
- Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
- Information which reveals that the IDB proposes:
 - (a) To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person, or;
 - (b) To make an order or decision under any enactment
- Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime

4.2. Charges may be imposed for the provision of some of the information within this publication scheme, largely where the information is not accessible from our website. Where a class contains information which may levy a charge, this is made clear with a £ symbol shown below. In adopting this scheme there has been an effort to be as open as possible but there are instances where, for legitimate reasons, certain information is not available. Justification for excluding information is made in consideration of the general exemptions contained in the Act, the Environmental Information Regulations, the Data Protection Act, General Data Protection Regulation or where it may be of a confidential or commercially sensitive nature.

4.3. All copyright is reserved by the Board and the Bedford Group.

5. The information available

5.1. Who we are and what we do (£):

- Constitution of the Board, including the structure and membership of the Board
- Staffing structure
- Making all Members and Officers aware of their responsibilities to adhere strictly to this policy at all times
- Geographical area covered
- Outline of responsibilities
- Arrangement of the Board within the Bedford Group
- Location of offices and contact details

5.2. What we spend and how we spend it (£):

- Annual accounts and financial reports
- Audit of accounts
- Schedules of paid accounts
- Revenue and capital spending plans
- Financial regulations

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- Funding: details of drainage rates, special levies, grants and other financial contributions/sources of income
- Staff and Board member allowances and expenses
- Contracts awarded and their value

5.3. What our priorities are and how we are doing (£):

- Aims, objectives and plans
- Performance against aims and plans
- Programme of works

5.4. How we make decisions (£):

- Schedule of Reserved Matters, Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
- Board meeting committee minutes and their terms of reference
- Members Code of Conduct
- Employees Code of Conduct
- Board minutes and reports
- Public consultations
- Reports of advisory groups/joint committees and ADA
- Environmental impact assessments
- Assessments of flooding risk
- Other publicly available reports

5.5. Our policies and procedures (£):

- Policies and procedures for the conduct of the Board's business
- Policies and procedures about the provision of services
- Policies and procedures about employment matters
- Asset management plan and earmarked reserves policy
- Investment policy
- Planning and byelaw policy
- Risk management policy
- Whistle blowing policy
- Anti-fraud and corruption policy
- Bribery act policy
- Data protection policy
- Freedom of information publication scheme
- Document retention and destruction policy
- Customer contact
- Charging regimes and policies

5.6. List and registers (£):

- Register of drainage infrastructure
- Asset register
- Complaints register

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- Register of Drainage Hereditaments
- Electoral register, (for the purpose of election of IDB members)
- Risk register
- Register of members' interests
- Register of gifts and hospitality
- Members' attendance register
- Environmental licences register
- Contracts register
- Planning & byelaw consents register
- Accidents & near misses register
- Freedom of information act disclosure log
- Unplanned flooding events register

5.7. The services we offer (£):

- Regulatory role & Byelaws
- Levels of protection
- Developments, operations and works programmes
- Notices, leaflets and guidance
- Media releases
- Details of the services for which the Board is entitled to recover a fee together with those fees

6. Feedback

- 6.1. Feedback, comments or complaints about this publication scheme should be directed to the Chief Executive or the Chairman of the Board, at the address stated in section 3 above. If you are not satisfied that information is being published in accordance with this scheme you can refer your complaint to the Information Commissioner:

The Case Reception Unit
Customer Services Team
Information Commissioners Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
<https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Version Control

Version	Changes made	Date
Version 1	n/a	April 2022