

**Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority
Publication Scheme
(Section 19 Freedom of Information Act 2000)**

This publication scheme is based on the model scheme made and approved by the Information Commissioner.

It commits Bedfordshire and Luton Combined Fire Authority (BLCFA) to make information available to the public as part of its normal business activities. The information provided is divided into seven classes of information listed below. If you want to know more about the definition of these classes of information please see the guidance available from the ICO website (www.ico.gov.uk).

This scheme commits BLCFA:

To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by BLCFA and falls within the classifications below.

- To specify the information which is held by BLCFA and falls within the classifications below.
- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information in line with the statements contained within this scheme.
- To produce and publish the methods by which the specific information is made routinely available so that it can be easily identified and accessed by members of the public.
- To review and update on a regular basis the information BLCFA makes available under this scheme.
- To produce a schedule of any fees charged for access to information which is made proactively available.
- To make this publication scheme available to the public.

The seven classes of information that BLCFA will publish are:

- 1. Who we are and what we do.**
Organisational information, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance.
- 2. What we spend and how we spend it.**
Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts.
- 3. What our priorities are and how we are doing.**
Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

4. How we make decisions.

Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations.

5. Our policies and procedures.

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

6. Lists and registers

Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the Authority.

7. The services we offer

Advice and guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information that BLCFA will not generally publish include:

- Information the disclosure of which is prevented by law, or exempt under the Freedom of Information Act, or is otherwise properly considered to be protected from disclosure.
- Information in draft form.
- Information that is no longer readily available as it is contained in files that have been placed in archive storage, or is difficult to access for similar reasons.

The method by which information published under this scheme will be made available

Where possible, information will be provided on the website (www.bedsfire.com). Where it is impracticable to make information available on the website or when an individual does not wish to access the information by the website, BLCFA will indicate how information can be obtained by other means and provide it by those means.

In exceptional circumstances some information may be available only by viewing in person. Where this manner is specified, contact details will be provided. An appointment to view the information will be arranged within a reasonable timescale.

Information will be provided in the language in which it is held or in such other language that is legally required. Where BLCFA is legally required to translate any information, it will do so.

Obligations under disability and discrimination legislation and any other legislation to provide information in other forms and formats will be adhered to when providing information in accordance with this scheme.

Charges which may be made for Information published under this scheme

The purpose of this scheme is to make the maximum amount of information readily available at minimum inconvenience and cost to the public. Charges made by BLCFA for routinely published material will be justified and transparent and kept to a minimum.

Material which is published and accessed on a website will be provided free of charge. Charges may be made for information subject to a charging regime specified by Parliament.

Charges may be made for actual disbursements incurred such as:

- photocopying
- postage and packaging
- the costs directly incurred as a result of viewing information

Charges may also be made for information provided under this scheme where they are legally authorised, or where they are in all the circumstances, including the general principles of the right of access to information held by BLCFA, justified and are in accordance with a published schedule or schedules of fees which is readily available to the public.

If a charge is to be made, confirmation of the payment due will be given before the information is provided. Payment may be requested prior to provision of the information.

Written requests

Information held by BLCFA that is not published under this scheme can be requested in writing, when its provision will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 1

Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance

Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
1.1 Structure of the Authority	The Members of the Authority are appointed by the Constituent Local Authorities.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
1.1 Staff Structure	Current outline of departmental structure, organisation chart and numbers in post.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
1.3 Contact	Offices and buildings and telephone numbers.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
1.4 Geographical area of operation	Bedfordshire and Luton covers an area of approximately 123,153 Ha with a population of around 572,400 (2007).	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service has 14 fire stations
1.5 General outline of responsibilities	The role of the Members, how you can contact them and the standards we set ourselves to provide an efficient and transparent democratic decision-making structure for the people of Bedfordshire and Luton.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 2				
What we spend and how we spend it				
Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement, contracts and financial audit				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
2.1 Summary of revenue budget estimates and capital expenditure plans	<p>Annual budget (revenue and capital).</p> <p>Medium term (three year) financial statement – current medium term financial statement which includes projections of the expenditure needs of the coming three years.</p> <p>Capital programme – current capital programme (i.e. the money which is invested in assets such as buildings and major items of equipment, including computers), which includes projections of the capital financing needs of the coming three years.</p>	<p>Website: www.bedsfire.com</p> <p>Hard copy</p>	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 2				
What we spend and how we spend it				
Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement, contracts and financial audit				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
2.2 Annual statement of accounts	<p>Annual accounts (prior to audit).</p> <p>Annual (unaudited) accounts as required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 together with the books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers and receipts relating to the accounts.</p> <p>The statement of the Authority's accounts, published when the external audit has been completed.</p>	<p>By inspection (during the statutory inspection period – as HQ (see Public Notices)</p>	<p>Free (Authority report).</p> <p>Copies of the audited accounts and the external auditor's report are also available for the public at a reasonable charge of £2 per hard copy.</p>	
2.3 Financial audit report	<p>The external auditor's annual report including a response by the Authority's staff to the points raised in the report.</p> <p>Internal audit plan.</p>	<p>Website: www.bedsfire.com</p> <p>Hard copy</p>	<p>Free</p>	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 2				
What we spend and how we spend it				
Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement, contracts and financial audit				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
2.4 Expenses paid to members of the authority	Details of the allowances and expenses that can be claimed including details of allowances and expenses paid to individual Members of the Authority.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	There is an allowance scheme for Authority members and each year we publicise the total sums paid to each member.
2.5 Procurement procedures	Information on tendering and procurement processes, supplier information and related documents.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 2				
What we spend and how we spend it				
Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement, contracts and financial audit				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
2.6 List of contracts and value	Readily accessible information about contracts that are large enough to have required a tendering process in accordance with financial regulations or are in relation to capital items.	Email	Free	This category excludes any information which is exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 because its release would, or would be likely to, prejudice commercial interests.
2.7 Internal financial regulations and delegated authority	Financial Regulations. These include details of how financial decisions are made and the officer's delegated financial authority.	<p style="text-align: center;">Website: www.bedsfire.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hard copy</p>	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 3				
What our priorities are and how we are doing				
Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections/reviews and audit				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
3.1 Strategic plan, business plan, aims and objectives	The Corporate Plan brings together in one documents the key work which we are doing. It also reports how well we perform and our targets for the next three years.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
3.2 Reports indicating service provision, performance assessments, operational assessment reports	The continuous improvement of services, including the promotion of prevention rather than intervention, management of performance against indicators, external assessments (except audit) and local partnerships to promote community safety.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
3.3 Reports by external inspectors	Along with all UK fire and rescue services and local authorities, we are subject to an annual assessment by the Audit Commission where we are given a score to show how well we are doing as an organisation.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

3.4 Joint Strategies	<p>We work in partnership with the other agencies to develop and maintain plans that will ensure a coordinated response in the event of a major or catastrophic incident occurring.</p> <p>It's vital that our plans for a coordinated response are ready in the event of emergencies, including terrorist attacks, incidents with hazardous material, floods and the other effects of extreme weather, because of the actions of one organisation at a major incident could impact on all of the other agencies involved.</p>	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
3.5 Statistical information	Corporate documents reflecting our performance, including statistical information.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 4				
How we make decisions				
Policy proposals. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures and records of decisions				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
4.1 Schedule of meetings open to the public	Meetings of the Authority, its committees and panels are held at Headquarters.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
4.2 Agendas and approved minutes of the authority and authority sub-committees	Agendas containing a summary of the business that will be discussed at the meetings can generally be viewed on the website five working days before the meeting. Minutes of the decisions taken at the meeting will also be available on the website once they have been agreed.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	Some information considered at Authority meetings is confidential or exempt under the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. Such information is not included to the publication scheme.

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 4				
How we make decisions				
Policy proposals. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures and records of decisions				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
4.3 Background papers for meetings open to the public	A list of Authority, Committee and Panel meeting dates with links to the agendas, minutes and reports for each meeting.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	Some information considered at Authority meetings is confidential or exempt under the provisions of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985. Such information is not included to the publication scheme.
4.4 Public consultations	Official written responses to consultations.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 5				
Our policies and procedures				
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
5.1 Policies and procedures for the conduct of authority business	Standing orders including delegation of decision making powers and financial provisions.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
5.2 Policies and procedures for the provision of services	A range of policies and procedures of the Authority that affect the manner in which services are provided, including policies and procedures for handling requests for information.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
5.3 Policies and procedures about the employment of staff	Information on recruitment, vacancies, terms and conditions, pay, pensions, equalities, health and safety and the environment. Also included to this class of information are discipline, grievance and health and safety policies.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
5.4 Customer service	Internal information outlining the procedures to be followed by staff when handling compliments and complaints, including information about what happens when you make a complaint and what to do if you are not satisfied with the outcome.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 5				
Our policies and procedures				
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
5.5 Internal instructions, manuals and guidelines.	Internal instructions, manuals and guidelines for dealing with the business of the Fire and Rescue Service.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	This class of information includes current guidance notes on fire safety, produced for the public covering a range of fire safety topics. Also included to this class are Policies and Procedures which set out detailed instructions on how we do things, how to operate in certain circumstances and things our staff should know and as such are deemed to be the official policy on a particular topic.

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 5				
Our policies and procedures				
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our services and responsibilities				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
5.6 Records management and personal data policies	Information security policies, records, retention, destruction and archive policies, and data protection including data sharing policies.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	
5.7 Charging regimes and policies	Details of statutory charging regimes. Charging policies. Charges made for information routinely published, including what costs are to be recovered together with the basis on which they are made and how they are calculated.	Website: www.bedsfire.com Hard copy	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 6				
Lists and registers				
Currently maintained lists and registers				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
6.1 Registers open to public inspection (and arrangements for access to the contents)	The current registers of prohibition, improvement and enforcement notice registers issued under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.	By inspection at your local fire and community safety centre.	Free	
6.2 Register of members' interests	The Members' Code of Conduct requires Members to the Authority to register their financial and other interests in a maintained and publicly available register.	By inspection at Headquarters	Free	
6.3 Register of gifts and hospitality	Member's gifts and hospitality register. Heads of Service and above gifts and hospitality.	By inspection at Headquarters	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 7				
The services we offer				
Generally this is an extension of part of the first class of information. While the first class provides information on the Authority's roles and responsibilities, this class includes details of the services the Fire and Rescue Service provides				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
7.1 Information about the provision of the Authority's services	Information of the main services provided, fire and rescue emergency response, community fire safety, emergency planning, legislative fire safety. A brief explanation of the provisions of special services and charges (that may apply) is also covered.	Email	Free	

BEDFORDSHIRE AND LUTON COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Publication Guide

Class 7 The services we offer				
Generally this is an extension of part of the first class of information. While the first class provides information on the Authority's roles and responsibilities, this class includes details of the services the Fire and Rescue Service provides				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
7.2 Regulatory responsibilities and procedures	<p>We will always take urgent enforcement action when we believe public safety is being put at risk in buildings. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 came into force on 1 October 2006. It greatly increased the number of premises for which we have enforcement responsibility. The law applies to all non-domestic premises and was the biggest shake-up of fire safety legislation for more than 30 years.</p> <p>The premises it applies to include offices, shops, care homes, community halls, pubs, clubs, restaurants, schools, marquees, hotels, hostels, factories and warehouses.</p> <p>Responsibility for complying with the order rests with employers in the workplace, but could also be on an owner or occupier. As well as enforcing fire regulations, we are also the licensing authority for the storage of petroleum in</p>	<p>Website: www.bedsfire.com</p> <p>Email</p>		

	Bedfordshire to make sure those keeping and dispensing petrol do so in a safe manner which is unlikely to cause risk to the public or environment.			
7.3 Leaflets and explanatory leaflets	Guidance notes on fire safety, produced for the public covering a range of fire safety topics	Email	Free	
7.4 Services for which the Authority is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	<p>The Authority has the discretion to charge or not to charge for some services by virtue of Section 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. It is agreed Authority policy to charge for certain special services as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of equipment to supply or remove water. • Clearing flooded premises. • Making structures safe where there is no risk of personal injury to the public. • Any special service classified as miscellaneous. <p>Incidents involving chemicals/hazardous materials occurring other than in domestic locations.</p>	Email	Free	
7.5 Media releases	News releases and details about the different campaigns we are currently involved in.	Email	Free	