



AXE BRUE & PARRETT INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS

GOVERNANCE

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME

Version 1

Approved by the Boards:

Axe Brue: 24 January 2014

Parrett: 28 January 2014

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 obligation 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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Introduction

1. What is and why does the Board use a Publication Scheme?

- 1.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The Act) give 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 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 (<http://www.ico.gov.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.
- 1.4 The Axe Brue and the Parrett Internal Drainage Boards are the two parties included, by Agreement, in the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium (SDBC). The Consortium provides the administration, management and engineering services on behalf of both Boards. Both Boards are independent statutory bodies responsible for complying with any duty set out in legislation. The Consortium staff ensure that both Boards comply with their legal duties. Both Boards aim to adopt similar policies to assist members of the public and minimise costs.

2. What information 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 guidance and newsletters

3. **How to access the information**

The information referred above may be accessed through a variety of means and in a number of formats where available.

The Boards provide part of its publically available information on the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium website. (www.somersetdrainageboards.gov.uk)

Please look at the website to see if the information sought is available there.

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.

- Information may be requested by email to drainage.boards@btconnect.com
- By telephone 01278 789906
- By post to;

Mr N Stevens
Clerk to the Boards
Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium
1 Church Street
Highbridge
TA9 3AE

Please note that where hard copies of information will normally be supplied upon request, multiple copies cannot normally be provided.

4. **The information available**

4.1 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, Where this is the case the reasons behind the decision to exclude certain information is clearly stated. Justification for excluding information is made in consideration of the general exemptions contained in the Act, the Environmental Information Regulations, the Data Protection Act or where it may be of a confidential or commercially sensitive nature.

Charges may be imposed for the provision of some of the information within this Publication Scheme. Where a class contains information which may levy a charge this is made clear with a £ symbol shown below.

Where information may be available on the website, the letter W will be shown.

4.2 Who we are and what we do:

- Constitution of the Board, including the structure and membership of the Board (**W**)
- Staffing structure

- Making all Members and Officers aware of their responsibilities to adhere strictly to this policy at all times
- Geographical area covered (W)
- Outline of responsibilities (W)
- Arrangement of the Board within the Somerset Drainage Board Consortium (W)
- Location of offices and contact details (W)

4.3 What we spend and how we spend it (£):

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

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

- Aims, objectives and plans
- Performance against aims and plans

4.5 How we make decisions:

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

4.6 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
- Risk management policy
- Whistle blowing policy
- Anti-fraud and corruption policy

- Bribery Act policy
- Data protection policy
- Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- Asset management plan and earmarked reserves policy
- Investment policy
- Planning and byelaw policy
- Document retention and destruction policy
- Customer contact
- Charging regimes and policies

4.7 List and registers (£):

- Register of drainage infrastructure
- Asset register
- Rate book
- Electoral register (for the purpose of election of IDB members)
- Risk register
- Accidents and near misses register
- Members' attendance register
- Register of members' interests
- Freedom of Information Act disclosure log
- Nuisance register
- Complaints register
- Register of gifts and hospitality
- Environmental licenses register
- Unplanned flooding events register

4.8 The services we offer (£):

- Regulatory role & Byelaws
- Levels of protection
- Developments, operations and work 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

5.0 Exempt information

5.1 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 Axe Brue or Parrett IDB's 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's.
- Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
- Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime
- 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

5.2 All copyright is reserved by the Board.

6. Feedback

6.1 Feedback, comments or complaints about this Publication Scheme should be directed to the Chief Executive or 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 the 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

<http://www.ico.gov/complaints.aspx>