



**AXE BRUE, PARRETT & NORTH SOMERSET LEVELS  
INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS**

**GOVERNANCE**

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PUBLICATION SCHEME**

Version 2.0

Approved by the Boards:		
Axe Brue IDB	24/03/2026	<i>W. L. Williams</i> Vice Chairman
Parrett IDB	24/03/2026	<i>ACP Beld</i> Chairman
North Somerset Levels IDB	24/03/2026	<i>Jz Beld</i> Chairman

To be reviewed every 36 months.

<b>Revisions</b>				
<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Approved</b>

## **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 (The Act) gives a general right of access to recorded information held by public authorities, sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. Internal Drainage Boards are 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://ico.org.uk/>)

1.3. The Boards are required to adopt and maintain a publication scheme setting out the classes of information they hold, the manner in which they intend 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, Parrett and North Somerset Levels Internal Drainage Boards are the three parties included, by agreement, in the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium (SDBC). The Consortium provides the administration, management and engineering services on behalf of all three Boards. The Boards are independent statutory bodies, responsible for complying with any duty set out in legislation. The Consortium staff ensure that all three Boards comply with their legal duties. All three Boards aim to adopt similar policies to assist members of the public and to minimise costs.

## **2.0. ROUTINELY AVAILABLE INFORMATION**

2.1. Information on who we are and what we do:

- a. Organisational information
- b. Structures
- c. Locations
- d. Contacts

2.2. Information on what we spend and how we spend it:

- a. Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure
- b. Procurement
- c. Contracts
- d. Audited accounts.

2.3. Information on what our priorities are and how we are doing:

- a. Strategies and plans.
- b. Value for money indicators
- c. Audits

- d. Inspections
  - e. Reviews
- 2.4. Information on how we make decisions:
- a. Decision-making processes
  - b. Records of decisions
- 2.5. Information on policies and procedures:
- a. Current written protocols
  - b. Policies and procedures for delivering our services
  - c. Responsibilities
- 2.6. Information on lists and registers:
- a. All statutory and non-statutory registers (with personal information redacted)
- 2.7. The service we offer:
- a. Information about the services we currently provide (including guidance and Newsletters)

### **3.0. HOW TO ACCESS THE INFORMATION**

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

3.2. The Boards provide part of its publically available information on the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium website. ( <https://somersestdrainageboards.gov.uk/>) Please look at the website to see if the information sought is available there.

3.3 All information is available for inspection on request and by prior appointment; where appropriate copies can be made available. Otherwise make your FOI request in writing by email to [admin@somersestdbs.co.uk](mailto:admin@somersestdbs.co.uk) or by post to the Clerk at the address below. Tell us who you are, how we can contact you and describe what information you want. We treat the day we receive your email or letter as the start date and will reply within 20 working days. If we need more detail to find the information we will ask you and pause our 20-day response clock until you reply. If we cannot answer within 20 working days we will tell you why and give a new date.

Clerk to the Boards  
Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium  
Bradbury House,  
33-34 Market Street,  
Highbridge,  
Somerset TA9 3BW

Telephone: 01278 789906

If you ask for information about drainage, flooding, water quality, land or related policies we will treat that as an environmental information request under the Environmental Information Regulations. Those rules generally favour giving the information unless a specific exception applies. We will tell you which rule we relied on if we refuse to disclose something and we will explain how we balanced the public interest.

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

#### 3.4 Charging and fees

Most things on our website are free. If we need to make copies, post them to you or spend a lot of staff time fulfilling a request we will tell you the cost first and ask you to pay before we send the information. Typical charges we use to calculate costs are: 10p per A4 sheet, 20p per A3 sheet, postage at cost and £25 per hour of staff time for large requests. We will explain the total cost and give you the choice to narrow your request to reduce or avoid charges.

### 4.0. THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE

4.1. The Consortium will make every effort to be as open as possible but there may be instances where, for legitimate reasons, certain information is not available. Where this is the case the reasons behind the decision to exclude certain information will be 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:

- a. The Constitution including the structure and membership of the Boards (W)
- b. Staffing structure
- c. Making all Members and Officers aware of their responsibilities to adhere strictly to this policy at all times
- d. Geographical area covered (W)
- e. Outline of responsibilities (W)
- f. Arrangement of the Boards within the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium (W)
- g. Location of offices and contact details (W)

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

- a. Annual account and financial reports (W)
  - b. Audit of accounts (W)
  - c. Schedules of paid accounts
  - d. Revenue and capital spending plans
  - e. Financial regulations
  - f. Funding: details of drainage rates, special levies, grants and other financial
  - g. contributions/sources of income
  - h. Staff and Board member allowances and expenses
  - i. Contracts awarded and their value
- 4.4. What our priorities are and how we are doing (£):
- a. Aims, objectives and plans
  - b. Performance against aims and plans
- 4.5. How we make decisions:
- a. Schedule of Reserved Matters, Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation
  - b. Board meeting and committee minutes and their terms of reference
  - c. Members Code of Conduct
  - d. Employees Code of Conduct
  - e. Board Reports
  - f. Public Consultations
  - g. Reports of advisory groups/joint committees and ADA
  - h. Environmental impact assessments
  - i. Assessments of flooding risk
  - j. Other publicly available reports
- 4.6. Our policies and procedures:
- a. Policies and/or procedures for the conduct of the Boards' business
  - b. Policies and/or procedures about the provision of services
  - c. Policies and/or procedures about employment matters

- d. Risk management policy
- e. Whistle blowing policy
- f. Anti-fraud and corruption policy
- g. Bribery Act policy
- h. Data protection policy
- i. Freedom of Information Publication Scheme
- j. Asset management plan and earmarked reserves policy
- k. Investment policy
- l. Planning and byelaw policy
- m. Document retention and destruction policy
- n. Charging regimes and/or policies

4.7. List and registers (£):

- a. Register of drainage infrastructure
- b. Asset register
- c. Rate book
- d. Electoral register (for the purpose of election of IDB members)
- e. Risk register
- f. Accidents and near misses register
- g. Members' attendance register
- h. Register of members' interests
- i. Freedom of Information Act disclosure log
- j. Complaints register
- k. Register of gifts and hospitality
- l. Environmental licenses register

4.8. The services we offer (£):

- a. Regulatory role & Byelaws
- b. Manage water levels and flood risk
- c. Developments, operations and work programmes
- d. Notices, leaflets and guidance
- e. Media releases
- f. Details of the services for which the Boards are 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;

- a. Information relating to any individual
- b. Information that is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
- c. Information relating to the financial affairs or business affairs of any particular person (including the Axe Brue, Parrett or North Somerset Levels IDB's holding that information)
- d. 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.
- e. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
- f. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime
- g. Information which reveals that the IDB proposes:
  - i. To give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person, or:
  - ii. To make an order or decision under any enactment

5.2. All copyright is reserved by the Boards.

## **6.0. DISCLOSURE LOG AND RECORD KEEPING**

We keep a public log of the FOI and EIR requests we have answered. The log shows the date, what was asked for and a copy or link to what we released unless we had a lawful

reason to withhold something. We keep request records and related emails in line with our document retention rules.

## **7.0 RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, VEXATIOUS REQUESTS AND COPYRIGHT**

- 7.1 Responsible officer, governance and review cycle — The Boards have designated the Clerk to the Boards as the Consortium’s FOI lead for operational handling of Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests. The FOI lead is the primary point of contact for requesters and for ICO correspondence. The Boards can receive reports on FOI/EIR activity and compliance as part of governance oversight. The Publication Scheme will be reviewed at least three years and earlier where legislative change or operational need requires revision. Contact details for the FOI lead are published above or on the Consortium website
- 7.2 Refusal, exemptions and vexatious requests — Where the Consortium refuses to supply information it will rely on the specific exemption or exception under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 or the Data Protection Act 2018 and will state the exemption or exception applied and the reasons for refusal. The Consortium may refuse to comply with manifestly unreasonable, repeated or vexatious requests in accordance with ICO guidance and will inform the requester of the refusal, the reasons and the right to request an internal review and to complain to the ICO.
- 7.3 Re-use and copyright — Public sector information provided under this Publication Scheme is subject to copyright. The Consortium permits re-use of its published information under the terms of the UK Open Government License where appropriate. Requests for re-use of material not covered by the Open Government License should be directed to [admin@somersetdb.co.uk](mailto:admin@somersetdb.co.uk) and will be considered in accordance with relevant copyright law.

## **8.0 FEEDBACK**

- 8.1 Feedback, comments or complaints about this Publication Scheme should be directed to the Clerk or Chairman of the Boards, at the address stated in section 3 above.

If you are unhappy with our answer you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days. Send your review request by email to [admin@somersetdb.co.uk](mailto:admin@somersetdb.co.uk) or by post to the Clerk. We will try to finish the review within 20 working days and will tell you the result in writing. If you are still unhappy after the review you can complain to the Information Commissioner’s Office at the following address.

Customer Services Team  
Information Commissioners Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

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