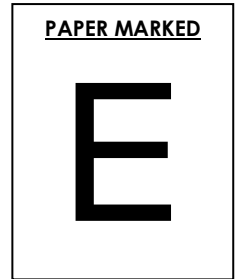


**POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR
LEICESTERSHIRE**

**ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND
COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE**



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| Report of | CHIEF CONSTABLE |
| Subject | TRANSPARENCY – COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLICATION SCHEME |
| Date | FRIDAY 22 JUNE 2018 – 2:00 p.m. |
| Author | STEVEN MORRIS |

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with a brief overview with regards to Leicestershire Police’s approach in complying with the transparency on publication of information.

Recommendation

2. It is recommendation that members note the contents of this report.

Overview

3. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 introduced the concept of ‘publication schemes’ which was a mandatory requirement for local authorities to proactively publish certain information. The schemes were the first element of the FOI legislation to be introduced and were seen as a vital resource for the public as they would be able to review this published information before making a bespoke Freedom of Information request. In effect, the aim of the publication schemes were to reduce demand on local authorities.

The approved scheme requires the following data sets to be published:

| Data Set | What it should include |
|---|---|
| Who we are and What we do. | Organisational information, location and contacts, constitutional and legal governance |
| What we spend and how we spend it | Financial information relating to projected and actual income and expenditure, tendering, procurement and contracts |
| What our priorities are and how we are doing. | Strategy and performance information, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews |
| How we make decisions | Policy proposals and decisions. Decision making processes, internal criteria and procedures, consultations, minutes of meetings |
| Our Policies and Procedures | Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities |
| List and Registers | Information held in registers required by law and other lists and registers relating to the functions of the authority |
| The Services we Offer | Advice and Guidance, booklets and leaflets, transactions and media releases. |

How to comply with the Publication Scheme

4. Leicestershire Police has a dynamic website that is continually developing in order to offer the best level of service to the communities we serve. As a result the website itself has become, in effect, our publication scheme as it contains a wealth of valuable information. Against the criteria set out above, we comply with the publication scheme requirements in the following way:

Who we are and what we do

5. Our website contains a significant amount of information that will be of interest to the public in this regard and includes:
 - A History and background of Leicestershire Police
 - Overview of our departments
 - Profiles of senior officers
 - Links to neighbourhood and local policing news and contact details
 - Latest news on police matters reported in the public domain
 - Links to our social media accounts
 - Advice and Information Section
 - Police Station locations
 - Policing Strategy and Policing Reform data –i.e. Blue Print 2020

This is just some of the key elements of our website and as a whole the website is vital in advertising our policing services and adequately achieves this requirement of the Publication Scheme.

What we spend and how we spend it

6. There are legislative exemptions prohibiting Leicestershire Police from publishing certain financial information as publication would be detrimental to operational policing and law enforcement. An example of this would be payments made for innovative equipment used to prevent and detect crime. However, we publish the following information proactively:

- Financial reports
- Expenditure over £500
- Contract information
- Chief Officer Expenses
- News articles on new technology – e.g. facial recognition technology, spit hoods etc.
- Information about the financial challenges facing the police service

Other financial information is available on our website but the above list gives an overview of the nature of the data we publish and our compliance with this element of the Publication Scheme.

What our priorities are and how we are doing

7. Within the Local Policing Tab of our website members of the public can see a list of all of our policing areas and they can then access key information, including the priorities for each area. For example the City Centre Policing team published 3 key areas in June regarding – Bike Theft, Theft from Stores and Anti-Social Behaviour. The website provides members of the public with an update about how the policing teams are addressing these priorities.

8. However, broader than that the website contains a wealth of information regarding organisational objectives and challenges and these are made available to the public. These include Blue Print 2020, the Policing Strategy and links to the broader Police and Crime Plan made available via the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

How we make decisions

9. Leicestershire Police are committed to transparency and wherever possible decision making processes are made available to the public. However, this has some obvious limitations as law enforcement decision making is not suitable for publication as it can directly affect

operational policing. As a result the website contains a dedicated 'Information Zone' which has links to a significant amount of key areas where advice and information is made available to the public.

10. Within this Section of the website there is also a library section which has a list of policies and procedures, as well as some minutes of meetings that are available for members of the public to access.

11. There is also a dedicated 'Events page' where members of the public can attend a wide range of events and hold the police to account such as beat surgeries.

Our Policies and Procedures

12. The Force Website contains a list of policies and procedures that are suitable for publication as well as ways in which members of the public can access information via schemes such as the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (CSODS).

List and Registers

13. Where required by Law the website contains certain documents that must be made available to the public as well as documents that we have proactively published to recognise our commitment to transparency. These include:

- Expenditure over £500
- Contract Information
- Privacy Notices
- Disclosure Rights members of the public can utilise
- External Inspection Reports
- Stop and Search figures

The Services we Offer

14. The current website significantly advertises the services we offer via media releases and other methods. Members of the public can access a wealth of information that allows them to be better informed about policing as well as how to take advantage of the services we offer.

The future of the publication scheme

15. Our current compliance with the Publication Scheme is as a result of putting the focus on what the public would expect our website to offer, as opposed to focusing on reducing the demands of FOI requests.

16. The aim of the FOI legislation and the Publication Scheme was never to create a burden for public authorities but it is recognised by the regulator, that the volume of FOI requests received by local authorities (especially the Police) has far outstripped the volumes originally envisaged. Leicestershire Police alone, received in excess of 1200 requests in 2017 with a 20% increase (approx) each year.
17. As a result, the Information Commissioner has never utilised any enforcement powers for the Publication Schemes and last year attended the National Police Chief Council Data Protection and Freedom of Information Conference and confirmed that this remains the case.
18. This is because the focus on proactive publication is changing to meet the public interest and it became apparent that a 'one size fits all approach' does not work across all local authorities. As a result the position of the NPCC and Leicestershire Police is that publication efforts should be targeted at producing information that will not only reduce FOI demand, but also will be of direct benefit to the public.
19. We are currently embarking on a project of work that will see the following occur with regards to the publication of information:
- FOI trends will be analysed to allow for the proactive publication of key information that is being regularly requested by the public
 - The FOI Disclosure Log has been re-activated and will see hundreds of FOI requests and the responses published for all members of the public
 - The FOI webpages will be re-engineered to better inform the public about what is already available in the public domain via our website and external agencies such as the Office for National Statistics.
 - Outdated information will be removed to ensure that the information available to the public is current and relevant to the public.
20. This project of work is being overseen by the Head of Corporate Services and will be led by the Head of Information Management in order to deliver our aim of providing the transparent disclosure of information to the public.

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