



Essex Fire Authority

Publication Scheme

v.01

This publication scheme has been prepared and approved by the Information Commissioner. It commits ECFRS 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 ECFRS:

- To proactively publish or otherwise make available as a matter of routine, information, including environmental information, which is held by ECFRS and falls within the classifications below.
- To specify the information which is held by ECFRS 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 ECFRS 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 ECFRS will publish are:

Who we are and what we do

Organisational information, locations 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.

Our policies and procedures

Current written protocols for delivering our functions and responsibilities.

Lists 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. A description of the services offered.

The classes of information that ECFRS 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 it is within the capability of ECFRS, information will be provided on the website (www.essex-fire.gov.uk). 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, ECFRS 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 ECFRS 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 ECFRS 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 ECFRS, 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 ECFRS 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.

Class 1				
Who are we 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 25 Members of the Authority are elected Members nominated by the three constituent District councils. Twenty members are nominated by Essex County Council, three by Southend Borough Council and two by Thurrock Borough Council.	Website (http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/pages/index.asp?area=15) Hard copy		
1.2 Staff Structure	Current outline (including profiles) of ECFRS's directorate, departmental structure, organisation chart and numbers in post.	Website Hard copy		
1.3 Contact information	Offices and buildings open to the public, the role of any contact, telephone numbers and email addresses.	Website		

Class 1 Who are we and what we do				
Organisational information, structures, locations and contacts, constitutional and legal governance				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
1.4 Geographical area of operation	ECFRS is one of the largest FRSs in the country, with a patch covering almost 400,000 hectares and a population of over 1½ million people. ECFRS deals with around 25,000 incidents per year.	Email		ECFRS has 52 fire stations.
1.5 General outline of responsibilities	The role of the Members of ECFRS, 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 Essex.	Website www.essex-fire.gov.uk		

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	ECFRS's annual budget (revenue and capital).	Website www.essex-fire.gov.uk		
2.2 Annual Statement of accounts	Annual accounts (prior to audit). ECFRS's 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. The statement of the Authority's accounts, published when the external audit has been completed	By inspection (during the statutory inspection period – (see notes) at ECFRS's HQ (see section 1.3 – Contact information).		This class of information is available as an Authority report under the class of information 4.3 Background papers for meetings open to the public.
2.3 Financial audit reports	The external auditor's annual report including a response by the Authority's staff to the points raised in the report. Internal audit plan.	Website Hard Copy		ECFRS's current internal audit plan. This describes the programme of annual reviews to be conducted by the internal audit team, which forms part of the finance department. The reviews cover control systems including both financial and non-financial systems.

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 Staff pay and grading structure	Authority report on current staff pay and grading structure.	Website Hard copy		
2.5 Expenses paid to members of the authority and senior officers	Details of the allowances and expenses that can be claimed including details of allowances and. expenses paid to individual Members of the Authority and senior officers	Website Hard copy		There is an allowance scheme for Authority members and each year we publicise the total sums paid to each member.
2.6 Procurement procedures	Information on tendering and procurement processes, supplier information and related documents.	Website Hard copy		

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
2.7 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		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.
2.8 Internal financial regulations and delegated authority	ECFRS's financial regulations. These include details of how financial decisions are made and the officer's delegated financial authority	Website Hard copy		

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	ECFRS's corporate plan	Website		Our achievements are also highlighted in the plan – such as the reduction in accidental fire deaths in the home, fewer fires overall and the target for home fire safety visits by the Service.
3.2 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.	Email		
3.3 Joint strategies	We work in partnership with the other emergency services, local government agencies and other fire services to develop and maintain plans that will ensure a coordinated response in the event of a major or catastrophic incident occurring. 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 the actions of one organisation at a major incident could impact on all of the other agencies involved.	Website Hard copy		

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
3.4 Statistical information	ECFRS produces a range of corporate documents reflecting our performance, including statistical information. A range of Authority and Committee reports on the work we do and how we are doing.	Hard copy		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.

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 and its committees are held at the County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1QH. Meetings of the Authority and its committees are open to the press and public, although they can be excluded if confidential information is likely to be discussed.	Website Hard copy		
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 ECFRS 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 Hard copy		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.
4.3 Background papers for meetings open to the public	A list of Authority and Committee meeting dates with links to the agendas, minutes and reports for each meeting.	Website		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.

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
4.4 Public consultations	Official written responses to consultations to Government and other governmental bodies (such as the Local Government Association and the Audit Commission), approved by the Authority. This category of information also includes ECFRS consultations.	Hard copy		

Class 5				
Our policies and procedures				
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our service and responsibilities				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
5.1 Policies and procedures for the conduct of authority business	Copies of ECFRS's standing orders. These include ECFRS's delegation of decision making powers and financial provisions.	Hard copy		
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	Hard copy		
5.3 Policies and procedures about the employment of staff	This category contains information about ECFRS staff and staff policies. It includes information on recruitment, vacancies, terms and conditions, pay, pensions, equalities, health and safety and the environment. Also included to this class of information are ECFRS's discipline, grievance and health and safety policies.	Hard copy		

Class 5				
Our policies and procedures				
Current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering our service and responsibilities				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
5.4 Customer service	ECFRS's current 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.	Hard copy		
5.5 Internal instructions, manuals and guidelines	Internal instructions, manuals and guidelines for dealing with the business of the ECFRS.	Hard copy Email		This class of information includes current ECFRS guidance notes on fire safety, produced for the public covering a range of fire safety topics. Also included to this class are ECFRS 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.
5.6 Records management and personal data policies	Information security policies, records retention, destruction and archive policies, and data protection including data sharing policies	Hard copy Email		Including fire reports for cost of £63.51
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.	Hard copy		

Class 6 Lists and registers				
Currently maintained lists and registers				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
6.1 Asset list and information asset register	Capital asset registers. Information asset register for the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005.	Email		
6.2 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 ECFRS. The register are maintained under the Environment and Safety Information Act 1988 and contains a summarised version of the notices issued except where the person served has successfully applied for trade secrets to be protected from disclosure.	By inspection on request		See section 1.3 – Contact information.
6.3 Register of members interest	The Members' Code of Conduct requires members of the Authority to register their financial and other interests in a maintained and publicly available register.	Website Hard copy		

Class 6 Lists and registers				
Currently maintained lists and registers				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
6.4 Register of gifts and hospitality	Member's gifts and hospitality register. Heads of Service and above gifts and hospitality.	By inspection		
6.5 Disclosure log	This log shows responses to access to information requests that we regard as having a wider public interest.			

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 role and responsibilities, this class includes details of the services of the ECFRS provides				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
7.1 Information about the provision of the Authority's services	Information of the main services provided by ECFRS: 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		
7.2 Regulatory responsibilities and procedures	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.	Website		

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Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
	The premises it applies to include offices, shops, care homes, community halls, pubs, clubs, restaurants, schools, marquees, hotels, hostels, factories and warehouses. Responsibility for complying with the order rests with employers in the workplace, but could also be on an owner or occupier.			
7.3 Leaflets and explanatory booklets	Current ECFRS guidance notes on fire safety, produced for the public covering a range of fire safety topics.	Website		

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 role and responsibilities, this class includes details of the services of the ECFRS provides				
Information type	Definition	Availability	Cost	Notes
7.4 Services for which the authority is entitled to recover a fee, together with those fees	<p>The ECFRS 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 brigade 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 issued by the ECFRS and details about the different campaigns we are currently involved in.	Website	Free	