

**ENGLAND'S REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES**

**PROPOSED MODEL  
PUBLICATION SCHEME PREPARED IN  
ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 19 OF THE  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000**

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 – PUBLICATION SCHEME

### Regional Development Agencies

There are nine Regional Development Agencies covering the English regions. Eight were established in April 1999 under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 and are Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs), sponsored by the Department of Trade & Industry. The ninth RDA, the London Development Agency, was created as part of the Greater London Authority under the GLA Act 1999 and has Local Authority status.

The statutory purposes of RDAs are:

- to further economic development and regeneration
- to promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness
- to promote employment
- to enhance development and application of skill relevant to employment
- to contribute to sustainable development

The aim of RDAs is to be key drivers of economic regeneration and to do this by co-ordinating regional economic development and regeneration - enabling the English regions to improve their relative competitiveness and reduce the economic imbalances that exist within and between regions. The RDAs are not main delivery agents; they work with and depend on regional partners to deliver the agreed output in the regional economic strategy.

Each RDA has developed in conjunction with its partners, an economic strategy for the next 10 years.

On a day to day basis the RDA'S activities which are set out in the Corporate Plan and Regional Economic Strategy, include:

- Working with regional partners (local authorities, local Learning and Skills Councils, the Small Business Service, higher and further education institutions, the voluntary and rural sectors etc) to implement the region's economic strategy.
- Funding physical and social regeneration projects and monitoring those receiving RDA funding to ensure value for money is being achieved.
- Working with businesses and industrial sectors in the region to improve their competitiveness, innovation and productivity and with potential investors into the region providing an aftercare service to those already settled.
- Implementing Government policy as set out in White Papers, such as the Urban White Paper, the Rural White Paper and 'Opportunity for all in a world of change'
- Working with the business and academic community and Trade Unions to improve learning and skills in the workplace and to develop the region's science base and enable technology transfer to enhance the knowledge based economy.

### The Freedom of Information Act

The Freedom of Information Act became law on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2000. It aims to foster a culture of openness in Government. The Act establishes a right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities and imposes obligations on public authorities to disclose information, subject to a range of exemptions. The Act will be operated fully by each of England's nine Regional Development Agencies from January 2005.

Under the Data Protection Act 1998 individuals already have the right to access their own information held on computer, and in some paper files. The Freedom of Information act will extend these rights to allow access to all types of information which public bodies hold, whether personal or non – personal. However the public body will not be required to release any information to which

any of the exemptions in the Act apply. A full list of exemptions can be found at the Lord Chancellor's website <http://www.lcd.gov.uk>

An important feature of the Act is the requirement for each public authority to produce a publication scheme setting out what information it will publish as a matter of course, how and when it will do so, and whether there is a charge for the information supplied.

### England's Regional Development Agencies Publication Scheme

Section 19 of the Freedom of Information 2002 requires every public authority to adopt and maintain a publication scheme which relates to the publication of information by the authority and publish information in accordance with its publication scheme. In addition section 20 of the Act allows public authorities falling within particular classes to produce model publication schemes.

As the nine English RDAs have similar remit and therefore fall within particular classes this publication scheme is a model scheme drawn up under sections 19 and 20 of the Act. The purpose of this publication scheme is to set out:

- The classes of information we commit to publish as a matter of course.
- How this information will be published
- Whether this information is available free of charge or on payment

The nine RDAs undertake to publish information in their areas of responsibility where:

- Publication is necessary and expedient to support the RDA statutory purposes.
- Publication is necessary for the purpose of accountability to Parliament and to the public.
- We are required to do so by statute or by Government commitment.

This scheme refers to the classes of information that the eight English RDAs will publish internally and externally. The scheme provides guidance on how to find information according to its type. Publication does not refer solely to printed material, but includes material posted on RDA websites, one – off printed documents, electronic documents, printed books, brochures reports and leaflets. Much of the material covered by the scheme is available on the each of the RDAs website as appropriate. Some RDA documents are also available for review in public libraries.

RDAs may not release any information to which any of the appropriate exemptions of the Act apply (in particular those outlined in sections 35 to 43).

### Responsibilities.

The person with overall responsibility for the publication scheme within each RDA and the respective individual who has responsibility for daily maintenance of the scheme are shown at the end of this document.

### Requesting Information

Information under the Act can be obtained by contacting the named contact as shown below. In some cases a charge for information may be applied. Costs are shown under each of the classes of information in this document. However, you will also be advised of the charge at the time of the request. Depending on demand a charge may also be levied for sending out printed versions of documents held on the website.

Named contact :

## Copyright

If you want to re-use or reproduce our publications for example commercially or for circulation for education/ training purposes, you will in most cases need to apply for a copyright licence.

## Complaints Procedure

If an applicant is dissatisfied with the response from the RDA he/she can seek an internal review of that decision. A member of staff who was not involved with the original request will undertake the review. If the applicant remains dissatisfied, because the RDA fails to publish information in accordance with its scheme, he/she can seek an independent review from the Information Commissioner. Individuals will not be able to contest a public authority's use of the exemptions until individual rights come into effect in January 2005.

Requests for a review by the Information Commissioner should be made in writing directly to:

The Information Commissioner  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire SK9 5AF  
Tel: 01625 545 700  
Fax: 01625 524510

## **CLASSES OF INFORMATION**

This publication scheme divides the information published by the [ ] RDA into two broad areas with a number of sub-headings under each as follows:-

### **1. RDAS AS ORGANISATIONS**

We will publish information about the RDA's organisation and role, including information on the RDA's statutory remit, budget, personnel and recruitment policies, each RDA's Annual Report and Accounts, corporate plans and press releases.

#### Plans and Strategies

##### Regional Economic Strategy and related documents

Description: The strategy sets out how the region will achieve sustainable economic development over a 10 – 20 year period. A number of supporting documents are also available.

Availability: Website, post

Cost: RES free; some support documents may incur a charge

##### Corporate Plan

Description: The Corporate Plan describes the RDA's planned expenditure, targets to be achieved and principal activities over a three year period

Availability: Website, post

Cost: Free

##### Annual Report and Accounts

Description: A report on the RDA's activities during the previous financial year and a statement of its approved accounts

Availability: Website, post, libraries

Cost: Free

#### Policies

##### Health and Safety

Description: How the Chief Executive discharges his/her responsibility for health and safety within the organisation

Availability: Website, post

Cost: Free

##### Race Equality Scheme

Description: A document setting out how the RDA will discharge its responsibilities under the Race Relations Amendment Act

Availability: Website, post

Cost: Free

## Equality and Diversity Strategy

Description: How the RDA promotes equality and diversity as an employer and through its activities with partner organisations  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

## **Recruitment and Development of staff**

### Current vacancies

Description: All current vacancies advertised externally  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

## Code of Conduct for Employees

Description: The Code sets out how the RDA expects their employees to conduct themselves within a public sector organisation  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

## Training and Development Policy

Description: The principles and philosophy for the training and development of RDA staff  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

## Customer Care

Description: A statement setting out the RDA's commitment to customer services, the standards set and a report on the achievement of the targets  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

## Complaints Procedure

Description: The general procedure for handling complaints and appeals; how to make a complaint and information on target response times  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

## **Finance and Audit**

### Financial Regulations

Description: The financial procedures the RDAs are required to follow when handling income and expenditure  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

### Procurement policies

Description: The process the RDA follows to purchase goods and services, including tendering arrangements  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

### Schedule of contracts awarded

Description: Details of all contracts which have been made under the European Public Procurement procedures.  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

### **Organisational Structure and contact points**

#### The RDA Boards

Description: Details of current Board members.  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

#### The Executive Team

Description: Details of the Chief Executive and Directors of the RDA  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

#### Organisational Structure Chart

Description: A chart showing the current division of responsibility within each RDA  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

#### Board Papers

Description: Summaries of Board Minutes and certain papers from Board meetings  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free  
Notes: Available from 01 November 2002

#### Public Consultation

Description: Documents relating to issues currently under consultation or previous consultations and summaries of views expressed  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

#### Press Releases

Description: Copies of all press releases issued by the RDA and collectively  
By all RDAs.  
Availability: Website, post  
Cost: Free

## **2. RDA ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE**

Information about RDA activity undertaken to achieve our objectives

### Targets and Outcomes

Description: Details of the targetry framework established by the Government for RDAs (Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier3) and, where appropriate, achievements against the targets.

Availability: Website, post

Cost: Free

### Project Information

Description: Details of key projects for which the RDA has agreed to provide funding over the past year

Availability: Website, post

Cost: Cost

Notes: Available from 01 April 2002

### Exhibitions and events

Description: Details of RDA sponsored/hosted events

Availability: Website, post

Cost: Free

## **Monitoring the RDA Publication Scheme**

The [ ] RDA wants the Publication Scheme to meet the needs of the stakeholders, partners and the general public. Suggestions for particular classes of information which we should consider publishing are welcome. Any comments or complaints about the Scheme should be sent to:-



## Contact details

The person with overall responsibility for the publication scheme within each RDA and the respective individual who has responsibility for daily maintenance of the scheme are shown below:

<b>Regional Development Agency</b>	<b>Person with overall responsibility</b>	<b>Person responsible for daily maintenance</b>	<b>Contact Address and Telephone number</b>
Advantage West Midlands			
East Midlands Development Agency			
Northwest Development Agency			
ONE North East	<b>To be completed once approval is received</b>		
London RDA			
South East England Development Agency			
South West Regional Development Agency			
Yorkshire Forward			