

WIRRAL COUNCIL

Transformation and Resources Policy & Performance Committee

14 April 2014

SUBJECT:	<i>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>MEMBERS OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL</i>

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report (included as Appendix 1) provides the findings and recommendations emanating from the Freedom of Information Scrutiny Review.
- 1.2 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 provides public access to information held by public authorities. Public authorities are obliged to publish certain information about their activities and members of the public are entitled to request information from them.
- 1.3 Members of the Transformation and Resources Policy & Performance Committee are requested to consider the contents of this report and note the recommendations arising from this review.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting on 23 September 2013, the Policy & Performance Committee agreed a work programme which included a review of Freedom of Information. Three Members of the Committee volunteered to undertake this work including Cllr Stuart Whittingham, Cllr Adam Sykes and Cllr Christina Muspratt.
- 2.2 At the first meeting of the Review Panel, it was agreed Cllr Adam Sykes would be the Chair of the Panel. The review was conducted over a small number of meetings held with appropriate officers and information was provided as requested by the Review Panel to allow detailed question and answer sessions to be carried out.

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 In January 2013, Wirral Council was subject to a three month period of monitoring action by the Information Commissioner's Office due to the timeliness of responding to Freedom of Information requests. On 14 November 2013, the Information Commissioner's Office notified the Council that it was satisfied performance had improved, resulting in no further monitoring action being taken.

- 3.2 The Review Panel acknowledged and commended the Council in ensuring that response times for Freedom of Information requests are now over the 85% threshold required by the Information Commissioner.
- 3.3 This report provides a number of recommendations which the Review Panel believes should assist the Council moving forward in managing its requirements to meet the Freedom of Information Act and also to become a more open and transparent Council.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 4.1 Members of the Committee are requested to note the contents and consider the recommendations arising from this report.
- 4.2 Members of the Committee are requested to consider whether they wish to refer the report to Cabinet.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Freedom of Information Scrutiny Review