Freedom of Information Scrutiny Review – Recommendations Progress Update

Recommendation	Update	Recommendation Status
Recommendation 1 Council Directorates should appoint and develop Freedom of Information Champions and Deputies to cover all Council services and to act as a single point of contact between those services and the Freedom of Information Team. The implementation of Champions should be driven by Legal and Member Services, including the provision of the appropriate training and support for the role to be fulfilled effectively and consistently across the Council. Council Directorates should, however, determine which officers should carry out these roles based on staffing resources, number of requests received and of services provided. It is expected that this recommendation should be fully implemented by December 2014.	A request for nominations for FOI champions was circulated with a summary of what is expected of the champions. Nominations have been received and once Future Council/remodelling is completed; the list can be revisited to ensure the Posts nominated remain within the Council structure.	Complete
Recommendation 2 If departmental Champions are to be introduced, they should be provided with appropriate access to CRM. It should then be ensured that all departmental actions / processes are fully recorded within CRM, including acknowledging the receipt of the request within 2 working days to allow the Freedom of Information Team to monitor all requests received effectively.	Departmental champions will all be trained and the training programme will include an introduction and appropriate training on the use of the CRM system. Documentation is available for the lifecycle of an FOI enquiry using the CRM system and this will form the basis for training.	Complete
Recommendation 3 Legal and Member Services should investigate whether there is an existing technical solution for the CRM to be automatically populated with all requests made via the What Do They Know website and email. If a technical solution is identified, this should be fully tested to ensure all requests are captured before being implemented	This was raised by Jane Corrin and investigated by Wirral IT section. There is no technical solution available to allow CRM to be automatically populated with requests made from the "Whatdotheyknow" website.	Complete

Recommendation 4 Legal and Member Services should determine the desired functionality of the IT software / workflow management system for the Council moving forward in managing Freedom of Information. If the existing CRM system is deemed not fit for purpose or too costly to configure, the feasibility of procuring a new case management system should be investigated. If the Council intends to acquire a new case management system, it should be ensured that a business case, supported by a cost-benefit analysis, is developed accordingly.	The functionality of CRM is being investigated for various roles it facilitates across the Council as part of the windows 7 migration project. The Council invested heavily in CRM and it is a key vehicle for many core council functions which utilise customer details. Future Council and remodelling meant there was some delay in fully exploring the suitability for CRM to continue to be the vehicle of choice for FOI. However, it has been established that there are several technical solutions on the market to deliver FOI. Several IT solutions providers have offered to visit Wirral and demonstrate their systems. It is anticipated that relevant interested parties, including an IT presence would be available after Future Council project is concluded.	Complete
Recommendation 5 In order to enhance performance management of compliance against Freedom of Information legislation, Legal and Member Services should: i) Ensure that the percentage of Freedom of Information requests responded to within 20 working days is reported to the Chief Executive's Strategy Group as part of the monitoring reports submitted, with the performance figure broken down at Council directorate and departmental level; and ii) Liaise with the Performance & Business Intelligence Team to develop a solution for providing exception reporting on directorate and departmental performance where an appropriate threshold tolerance has not been met. This recommendation should be implemented in line with the commencement of the new municipal year.	i) This is now in place and reported to the Strategic Leadership Team. ii) This is now in place and reported to the Strategic Leadership Team.	Complete

Recommendation 6 Legal and Member Services should implement a process for identifying emerging trends and themes of all Freedom of Information requests received by the Council and to then ensure that the Council's Publication Scheme is appropriately updated with the relevant information.	This is currently in place and is reported by the FOI team as part of the weekly report.	Complete
Recommendation 7 Legal and Member Services should engage with the Corporate Marketing Team to implement a strategy on using the Council's internet website in order to: i) Publish the Council's performance on managing Freedom of Information requests on a periodic basis, including all relevant statistics such as volume of requests received. ii) Categorise and publish commonly asked Freedom of Information requests received with their respective responses.	i) The FOI team produce this information and have spent some time fine tuning the data to ensure it is in an easy to read/understand format. A meeting will be scheduled in the near future with Corporate Marketing to make final determinations on frequency and format of the data to be published and then the information can go live. ii) The FOI team now categorise and analyse themes and emerging trends. A meeting will be scheduled in the near future with Corporate Marketing to make final determinations on format of the data to be published.	In progress
Recommendation 8 Legal and Member Services is requested to note the views of the Panel on the search functionality of the Council's website, when using detailed search criteria. These views should be forwarded to the Corporate Marketing Team to ensure that they can be considered as part of the Council's ongoing development of the Council's website.	The functionality of the Council's website and the difficulties of using the search criteria were raised with the Corporate Marketing Team. These views were taken on board and formed part of the review of the website and many improvements have now been made with regard the functionality of the website.	Complete