

## SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Report of:** Maxine O'Mahony, Executive Director – Strategy & Governance

**To:** Policy Development Panel Tuesday, 26 June 2018,  
Cabinet, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**(Author:** Charlotte Paine Senior Business Intelligence Officer)

**Subject** Freedom of Information Policy

**Purpose:** To present the draft of the Council's Freedom of Information policy to the Policy Development Panel for review.

### **Recommendation(s):**

- 1) That the Policy Development Panel recommend the adoption of the draft Freedom of Information Policy to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The current Freedom of Information policy was originally adopted in June 2014. The new version looks to update the policy in line with any changes that have been seen in the last 4 years and renew the format.
- 1.2 The format changes to the policy have been made in consultation with the chair and vice of the policy development panel in order to produce a policy that is written in plain English and reduced in size.
- 1.3 The new policy achieves this by linking directly to the Freedom of Information Act and therefore reducing the need to make regular changes to the policy should there be changes to the act as this is incorporated into the policy.
- 1.4 Appendix A is the draft policy that is being introduced to the panel asking for your recommendation to Cabinet for adoption.

### **2.0 OPTIONS**

- 2.1 Policy Development Panel to review the draft freedom of information policy and make a recommendation to Cabinet to adopt the new Policy.
- 2.2 Do nothing.

### **3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 3.1 The currently adopted policy is 4 years old and due a review. Whilst there have not been any fundamental changes to statutory requirements, the new policy is improved for the

benefit of the people wishing to contact the Council regarding freedom of information.

#### 4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

4.1 An updated policy will provide an opportunity to promote the policy and reintroduce new procedures to ensure that the services are aware of their statutory requirements.

#### 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Transformation Programme; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

#### 5.1 Constitutional & Legal

5.1.1 It is a statutory requirement to answer freedom of information requests. This policy provides assurance that this is clearly set out to services and requesters.

#### 6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 N/A

#### 7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 N/A

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Background papers:- [See The Committee Report Guide for guidance on how to complete this section](#)

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#### Lead Contact Officer

Name and Post: Charlotte Paine Senior Business Intelligence Officer  
Telephone Number 07870 835233  
Email: charlotte.paine@breckland-sholland.gov.uk

**Key Decision:** No

**Exempt Decision:** No

**This report refers to a Mandatory Service**

#### Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A Freedom of Information Policy