

SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Councillor Tracey Carter, Executive Member – Governance & Customer

To: Cabinet, 10th July 2018

(Author: Charlotte Paine Senior Business Intelligence Officer)

Subject Freedom of Information Policy

Purpose: To present the Council's Freedom of Information policy to Cabinet for approval to adopt.

Recommendation(s):

1) That the Cabinet approve the adoption of the Freedom of Information Policy.

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 There are no fundamental changes to the policy as it is aligned with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which has seen no major updates in the years since the previous policy was written.
- 1.3 There are some changes that have been made to the format changes to the policy. These 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. The current policy is reduced by over 6 pages whilst still containing all the relevant information required.
- 1.4 The new policy achieves this reduction by linking directly to the Freedom of Information Act and therefore reducing the need for complex language in the policy and giving the opportunity to highlight the most necessary elements of the Act and how the Council will implement it. It also reduces the need to make regular changes to the policy should there be changes to the act as this is incorporated into the policy.
- 1.5 Appendix A is the policy that is being introduced to Cabinet asking for your approval for adoption.

2.0 OPTIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet to review and approve adoption of the freedom of information 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.

5.2 Consultation

5.2.1 The policy has been through a process of consultation on the draft and new format with the Policy Development Panel and the officer led Statutory Information Group.

6.0 WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED

6.1 N/A

7.0 ACRONYMS

7.1 N/A

Background papers:-	None
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Key Decision: No

Exempt Decision: No

This report refers to a Mandatory Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A Freedom of Information Policy