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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>FINANCE and MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 7</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2021</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR CORPOARTE RESOURCES</b>	<b>OPEN</b>
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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: POLICY and PUBLICATION SCHEME</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM 11</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

1.1 That the Freedom of Information Policy and Publication Scheme are approved.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

2.1 To consider a Policy for dealing with Freedom of Information requests, together with an updated Publication Scheme.

2.2 This follows an Internal Audit review of the Council's procedures for dealing with requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004.

## **3.0 Detail**

3.1 The Council's procedures for dealing with requests for information are well established and generally remain fit for purpose. As part of Internal Audit's work programme for 2021/22, a review of the Council's procedures for dealing with and responding to requests, was undertaken.

3.2 The Audit report made several recommendations for improving the Council's procedures. These mainly concerned having a specific Policy in place in order to document arrangements and to make it clearer to Council Officers and requestors of information, how a request should/would be dealt with.

3.3 This is considered good practice and has now been adopted by many authorities to demonstrate transparency in accessing information, together with making as much information more easily available in a timely and cost-effective manner.

- 3.4 The Audit report also recommended that the Council's Publication Scheme be updated to reflect the latest Model document produced by the Government's Information Commissioner.
- 3.5 Other recommendations related to training/briefing sessions being made available to Officers involved in the process and those regularly dealing with requests.
- 3.6 All recommendations are currently being implemented and monitored by the Audit Sub-Committee.
- 3.7 A draft Policy and an updated Publication Scheme are attached alongside this report for consideration by the Committee.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 None.

#### **5.0 Corporate Implications**

##### **Employment Implications**

- 5.1 None

##### **Legal Implications**

- 5.2 None

##### **Corporate Plan Implications**

- 5.3 None directly. The Policy and Publication Scheme are part of ensuring sound Governance at the Council.

##### **Risk Impact**

- 5.4 None

#### **6.0 Community Impact**

##### **Consultation**

- 6.1 None required

##### **Equality and Diversity Impact**

- 6.2 None

##### **Social Value Impact**

- 6.3 None

##### **Environmental Sustainability**

- 6.4 None

## 7.0 **Background Papers**

7.1 None