

| <b>REPORT TO</b>     | <b>DATE OF MEETING</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Governance Committee | 15 April 2015          |

Report template revised June 2008



| <b>SUBJECT</b>      | <b>PORTFOLIO</b> | <b>AUTHOR</b> | <b>ITEM</b> |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Transparency Agenda | Leader           | David Whelan  | 7           |

## **SUMMARY AND LINK TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The aim of this report is to update members on the latest developments in the transparency agenda; in particular to inform members of the action that has been taken to comply with the latest Government Transparency Codes that were published in 2014 and 2015 (the Transparency Code).

The Council remains fully committed to acting in an open, transparent and publicly accountable fashion.

The Action Plan on Transparency could have an impact on the achievement of all of the Council's key objectives but is particularly concerned with making South Ribble an efficient, effective and exceptional council

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That Members note the contents of this report and in particular note the action that has been taken to comply with the Council's duties under the Transparency Code

## **DETAILS AND REASONING**

Members will no doubt recall previous reports (in 2012) relating to the Government's transparency agenda.

In October 2014 the Government issued a new Transparency Code. A slightly amended version of this Code was published in 2015.

The intention behind the Code is as follows:

"This Code is issued to meet the Government's desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability and make it easier for local people to contribute to the local decision making process and help shape public services. Transparency is the foundation of local accountability and the key that gives people the tools and information they need to enable them to play a bigger role in society. The availability of data can also open new markets for local business, the voluntary and community sectors and social enterprises to run services or manage public assets."

Most of the requirements in the Code are mandatory. Some information must be published quarterly; other information on an annual basis.

Please see appended to this report Transparency Agenda Action Plan 2015. This sets out in detail precisely what the requirements are and what action we have taken in this regard. Members will note that appropriate action has been taken to comply with the requirements of the Code. It should be emphasised that many of these requirements we have been meeting for some time. It should also be emphasised that in certain areas we have exceeded what we needed to do.

Government Regulations ensure that these requirements have the force of law.

By way of a brief summary we are required to publish information in all of the following areas:

- Procurement
- Contracts
- Expenditure over £500
- Government Procurement Cards
- Senior Employee Salaries
- Pay Multiple
- Local Authority Land
- Grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Organisation Chart
- Trade Union Facility Time
- Parking Revenues
- Controlled Parking Spaces
- Constitution
- Waste Collection Contracts
- Fraud

In the 2015 amended Code there is also a duty on local authorities to publish data on what Council owned "Social Housing Stock" there is. In South Ribble this of course will not affect us as all our housing stock was transferred to New Progress in the nineties.

Members are asked to note this report and the action that has been taken in this regard.

## WIDER IMPLICATIONS

In the preparation of this report, consideration has been given to the impact of its proposals in all the areas listed below, and the table shows any implications in respect of each of these. The risk assessment which has been carried out forms part of the background papers to the report.

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>FINANCIAL</b>              | There are no direct financial implications arising from this report   |
| <b>LEGAL</b>                  | <p>The Council has carefully considered the contents of the Transparency Code.</p> <p>Much of the Transparency Code is mandatory. The Transparency Code has legislative force.</p> <p>Related to this are other statutory duties set out in legislation such as the Localism Act – for example publication of a Pay Policy. This is incorporated into the Transparency Code.</p> <p>Over and above the satisfaction of any statutory duties the Council remains committed to acting in as open, transparent and accountable manner.</p> |
| <b>RISK</b>                   | <p>A failure to act in an open and transparent fashion could damage the reputation of the Council.</p> <p>More fundamentally much of the Transparency Code is now mandatory – we must comply with it.</p>   |
| <b>THE IMPACT ON EQUALITY</b> | This report and the actions taken in this regard do not impact adversely on any equality issues.  |

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|--------------------------|--|
| <b>OTHER (see below)</b> |  |
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|---|--|---|---|
| <i>Asset Management</i>                           | <i>Corporate Plans and Policies</i>            | <i>Crime and Disorder</i>                 | <i>Efficiency Savings/Value for Money</i> |
| <i>Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion</i> | <i>Freedom of Information/ Data Protection</i> | <i>Health and Safety</i>                  | <i>Health Inequalities</i>                |
| <i>Human Rights Act 1998</i>                      | <i>Implementing Electronic Government</i>      | <i>Staffing, Training and Development</i> | <i>Sustainability</i>                     |

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS