

<b>MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY</b>			
<b>MEETING OF THE:</b>	<b>AUTHORITY</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>30 JUNE 2015</b>	<b>REPORT NO:</b>	<b>CFO/062/15</b>
<b>PRESENTING OFFICER</b>	<b>DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER</b>		
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	<b>DEB APPLETON</b>	<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	<b>JULIE YARE</b>
<b>OFFICERS CONSULTED:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GROUP</b>		
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS - 2014/15 UPDATE</b>		

<b>APPENDICES:</b>	
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### **Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the number and type of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the Authority between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and 1<sup>st</sup> April to date.

### **Recommendation**

2. That Members note the content of this report.

### **Introduction and Background**

3. At the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013 Members requested an update on the number and type of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received by the Authority. That report was presented to Members in January 2014 and this report is a follow on report dealing with 2014/15.
4. Since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005, all public authorities have had a legal obligation under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2005 to provide information through an approved publication scheme and in response to requests made by anyone regardless of age, location or nationality. Those requesting information do not need to mention the FOI Act 2000 in their request.
5. This obligation applies to all information held by the Authority but personal information will also be subject to compliance under the Data Protection Act 1998 and is generally exempt information under the FOI Act 2000. All staff have a responsibility to comply with the FOI Act 2000. Under the Act staff do not have the right to ask why the information is required, but they can ask for more details to assist in locating the information.

6. Requests must be received in a written format and from the moment a written request is received a 20 working day countdown begins. All written requests for information are subject to the FOI Act 2000 requirements whether or not they mention the Act, but all the requests detailed below have been specifically sent as FOI requests and dealt with by the Strategy and Performance Department in conjunction with the Department holding the information.
7. A number of exemptions exist which the Authority can apply in order to refuse a FOI request, but these are used infrequently, with the exception of Exemption 21 which allows the Authority not to provide the information requested if it already exists elsewhere. In these cases a link to the information is included in the refusal letter. In 2014-2015, 17 requests have been refused, of which 2 were only partly refused. The majority of these were citing exemption 21. The public interest test is applied to determine whether it would be in the public interest to release otherwise exempt information. There were no complaints to the Information Commissioners Office.

#### Freedom of Information requests received

8. The table below details the number of requests received from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 and 1<sup>st</sup> April to date. It is important to note that each request could include many complex questions, so the time taken to deal with them can vary considerably. As can be seen from figures 1 and 3 below there is a predicated 14% increase in FOI requests in 2015-2016. In 2014 – 2015 there were 137 requests with 96% of requests being answered within the 20 working day deadline. The 4% of requests which were outside this timescale were as a result of a number of complex requests arising from the consultations on the Wirral. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to date all requests have been met within the 20 working day deadline.

Fig. 1

<b>The Number of requests received by financial year</b>		
<b>MONT</b>	<b>No. of FOI requests April 2014- March 2015</b>	<b>No. of requests from April 2015</b>
April	1	1
Ma	1	1
June	1	
Jul	1	
August	7	
September	1	
October	9	
November	1	
December	1	
Januar	1	
Februar	1	
March	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>26</b>

9. Examples of the types of information requested are set out in Fig. 3 below. There are a number of recurring themes and these often relate to what is topical in the media at the time. It is the case however, that although similar in theme each request is slightly different and almost invariably requires the information to be provided in a different format.
10. By way of comparison, the data previously presented to Authority Members is reproduced below:

Fig 2.

MONTH	Requests made in 2011	Requests made in 2012	Requests made in 2013 (to November)
January	7	4	5
February	8	10	7
March	7	10	5
April	8	5	15
May	3	12	4
June	7	7	9
July	7	7	9
August	6	1	9
September	4	4	10
October	7	7	11
November	9	9	8
December	3	3	7
Total	76	79	99

Fig 3

THE AMOUNT OF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS IN FINANCIAL YEARS BY NO. OF REQUESTS FROM 1st APRIL 2014 - 31st MARCH 2015				
FOI Ref:	Exemption Applied	Type of Requester	Details of Information Requested	Fulfilled on time
<b>Requests from Commercial Company</b>				
FOI/42/2014	No	Commercial Company	Construction procurement Activities Information.	Yes
FOI/43/2014	No	Commercial Company	Directors information and Salary request	Yes
FOI/46/2014	Yes sec 43	Commercial Company	Security Services bid	Yes
FOI/52/2014	No	Commercial Company	ICT Contract Information	Yes
FOI/65/2014	No	Commercial Company	Information about conference calling	Yes
FOI/73/2014	No	Commercial Company	ICT Contract Information	Yes
FOI/76/2014	No	Commercial Company	Incidents to schools	Yes
FOI/82/2014	No	Commercial Company	Finance & Planning/Budgeting	Yes
FOI/93/2014	No	Commercial Company	Amount paid to the CBI	Yes
FOI/97/2014	No	Commercial Company	Contacts for FC, ICT and procurement.	Yes
FOI/120/2014	No	Commercial Company	Qualifying criteria for match funding grants available for installation of sprinkler systems	Yes
FOI/129/2014	No	Commercial Company	Total spend on temporary agency staff	Yes
FOI/136/2014	No	Commercial Company	Information on IT apprenticeship provision	Yes
FOI/09/2015	No	Commercial Company	Information for AFA	Yes
FOI/10/2015	No	Commercial Company	List of subcontractors, suppliers etc for JCC project and refurb at St Helen's FS and Heritage Museum	Yes
FOI/08/2015	No	Commercial Company	ICT Information	Yes
FOI/32/2015	No	Commercial Company	Procurement Information	Yes
FOI/20/2015	Yes Sec 21,31,38	Commercial Company	List of retailers licensed to supply fireworks to the public.	Yes
FOI/12/2015	Yes Sec 21	Commercial Company	Fire Safety Legislation information	Yes
FOI/37/2015	No	Commercial Company	False Alarms	Yes
FOI/33/2015	No	Commercial Company	Fire Safety Notices	Yes
FOI/57/2014	No	Commercial Company	Information about Fires of Special Interests FOSI	Yes
<b>Requests from other FRS</b>				
FOI/36/2015	No	FRS	Number of incidents involving e-cigarettes in the last 12 months	Yes
FOI/44/2014	No	FRS	Callout information student accommodation	Yes
FOI/51/2014	No	FRS	Health & Safety Data	Yes
FOI/77/2014	No	FRS	WSF&RS Staffing of appliances and justification.	Yes
FOI/130/2014	No	FRS (DCLG)	Firefighter's work related injury compensation payments	Yes
<b>Requests from other Local Authority's</b>				
FOI/94/2014	No	Local Authority	Incidents involving Sky Lanterns	Yes
FOI/112/2014	No	Local Authority (Manchester)	Response times 'average' for proposed station in Greasby (Wirral/Greasby)	Yes
<b>Requests from the Media</b>				
FOI/02/2015	No	Media	In the past 3 years how many service vehicles have been involved in a collision (What vehicles, cause etc)	Yes
FOI/06/2015	No	Media	Fire Crews taking patients to hospital	No
FOI/35/2015	No	Media	Suspensions	Yes
FOI/48/2014	No	Media	Request about E-cigarettes	Yes
FOI/54/2014	No	Media	Information about rescues of people(meaning adults and teenagers)	Yes
FOI/56/2014	No	Media	Information re: incidents at Muirhead Avenue between 2004-2007.	Yes
FOI/60/2014	No	Media	Fire incidents/fatalities at sheltered/Nursing Homes	Yes
FOI/62/2014	No	Media	Remuneration for CFO	Yes
FOI/66/2014	No	Media	Information on use of official car for private journeys	Yes
FOI/67/2014	No	Media	Number of incidents in 2013 and 2014 (first 6 months) to rescue obese people	Yes
FOI/71/2014	Yes partial exempt	Media	Number of compensation claims from staff and public in 2013	Yes
FOI/72/2014	No	Media	Name, job title and contact details who holds the role of Senior Information Risk Owner	Yes
FOI/78/2014	No	Media	Animal rescues in Calendar years March 2011- April 2014	Yes
FOI/79/2014	No	Media	Return to employment after retirement	Yes
FOI/81/2014	No	Media	ICT details	Yes
FOI/89/2014	No	Media	Information for incidents involving faulty mobile phone or other electrical chargers.	Yes
FOI/90/2014	No	Media	Fires caused by e-cigarettes	Yes
FOI/91/2014	No	Media	Bariatric incidents	Yes
FOI/96/2014	No	Media	Charge for non emergency call outs.	Yes
FOI/98/2014	No	Media	Incidents of fire at recycling plants	Yes
FOI/106/2014	No	Media	Information on Bariatric rescues.	Yes
FOI/27/2015	No	Media	999 hoax call information	Yes
FOI/115/2014	No	Media	Information on the number of animal rescues in the past 5 years and 2014 to date	Yes
FOI/127/2014	No	Media	Attempts of hacking into website, social media, IT systems or phone systems.	Yes
FOI/131/2014	No	Media	Number of hoax calls in 2014 to date	Yes

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**Equality and Diversity Implications**

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11. There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the report. The EIA for the Information Security and Governance Policy (Agreed by Policy and Resources Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2013) has an equality impact assessment and this highlighted the need to ensure that assistance is provided to any person who wishes to submit a FOI request. This could for example mean waiving the requirement to apply in writing if this is not possible for the applicant.

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**Staff Implications**

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12. There are no implications for staff arising directly from this report however dealing with FOI requests takes up significant amounts of staff time.

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**Legal Implications**

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13. The Authority complies with the FOI Act 2000 when dealing with requests for information and also the changes made to that Act by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

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**Financial Implications & Value for Money**

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14. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report however there is an indirect cost to the Authority in staff time spent dealing with FOI requests.

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**Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications**

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15. The Authority has in place processes that enable requests for information to be dealt with in accordance with the law, thus reducing risk to the Authority.

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Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

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16. Unless an exemption applies, individuals are provided with the information they require about the Authority in an efficient manner

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

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**FOI**                      **Freedom of Information**