

Report to Constitution Working Group

Date of meeting: 26 January 2016



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Subject: Constitution Review - Article 18 (Access to Information)

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Democratic Services Officer: M. Jenkins (01992 564607)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Working Group consider a proposed new Article 18 (Access to Information) of the Constitution.

Report:

1. (Democratic Services Manager) The aim of the current review of the Council's Constitution is for the Working Group to look critically at each part of the Constitution to try and bring together and rationalise procedures against the relevant legislative background.
2. Under the current Constitution, provisions relating to access to information are contained in a number of separate protocols and conventions. The opportunity has therefore been taken as part of the ongoing review of the Constitution to incorporate these various provisions within a new Article 18 (Access to Information).
3. A draft version of Article 18 is attached as Appendix 1 to this report for consideration by the Working Group. This also incorporates matters agreed by the former Constitution and Members' Services Scrutiny Panel in 2013 that were inadvertently not added to the Constitution at that time.
4. As part of its ongoing review of the Constitution, the Working Group has previously decided that where rules apply generally, they should be taken into the main rules section. Therefore in the redrafting of the rules section of the Constitution, officers have attempted to take sections into the rules. Some of what was previously contained in separate protocols and conventions has been inserted into the new Article 18 and the Article also seeks to address instances of relevant procedures being spread across the Constitution, making it difficult to use.
5. Members are reminded to bring their copies of the Constitution to the meeting.