

## Freedom of Information (FOI) - Part 1 - Manifesto promises

Written by WRT

Thursday, 03 November 2011 17:37 - Last Updated Friday, 02 December 2011 12:21

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FOI was raised in the Keys on 1st November 2011:

The Hon. Member for Douglas South (Mrs Beecroft) to ask the Chief Minister:

*"When he plans to introduce a Freedom of Information Act?"*

As part of his answer he stated:

*"I can confirm that the Council of Ministers will be considering a paper on this subject of Freedom of Information at its meeting this week."*

PAG trusts that in considering the paper, presumably written by someone in the Chief Secretary's Office, Ministers will have reflected on the remarks they made about FOI in their 2011 General Election manifestos. Of the 10 members of the Council of Ministers (CoMin) only Shimmin and Teare did not refer to FOI. Here's what the remainder said:

**Anderson** I am in favour of openness and transparency and would support Freedom of Information legislation but not at any cost. It must be understood that much of the information that would be open to inspection would be of little interest, and would cost a lot to provide. On occasions there is a need for confidentiality - sensitive issues involving individuals, commercial confidence and matters subject to delicate negotiation. Contrary to the rumours, there is no conspiracy of silence - but much of the work of Government is mundane, routine and repetitious.

**Bell** Government must engage with the public more effectively and promote appropriate Freedom of Information legislation to ensure openness and a better understanding of issues

**Cretney** As the person who first raised the need for Freedom of Information legislation his whole political philosophy is one of transparency, accountability and openness

**Crookall** I will continue to support the Freedom of Information Bill being introduced as soon as possible .....

**Gawne** Transparency and Freedom of Information: I will continue to press for a more transparent system of Government and support the early introduction of stronger freedom of information legislation.

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**Karran** Introduce a Freedom of Information Act

**Robertshaw** As a result of the broken promise of the last administration we do not yet have a freedom of information act so there will be a need to continue pushing for this in the new house. To avoid an information request overload when we are eventually able to bring this into law each department should, as soon as possible, embark on a policy of loading as much information as possible on to its internet site because the more information that is readily available the less time will be taken up on expensive searches later. Other procedures could be adopted to smooth the path of its introduction to assist the avoidance of excessive costs.

**Watterson** I have been frustrated by the lack of a Freedom of Information Bill.