

PART A

AGENDA  
ITEM **12**

Report to: Audit Committee  
Date of Meeting 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010  
Report of: Head of Legal and Property Services  
Title: Requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

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1. **SUMMARY**

This is a half year report of requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009 until 31st March 2010 the Council received 115 requests all but 22 of which were replied to in the required time. A list of the requests is attached at appendices 1 and 2 for information

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To note the contents of this report.

Contact Officer:

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Report approved by Managing Director

### 3.0 **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came fully into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. As a public authority we are obliged to answer written requests for information under the Act within 20 working days
- 3.2 This report covers the periods 1<sup>st</sup> October 2009 until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.
- 3.3 In this period the Council recorded receiving 120 requests for information under the Act all but 20 were replied to within the statutory 20 working days.
- 3.4 The requests have been varied. Appendices 1 and 2 give a brief summary of each request.
- 3.5 There have been 21 requests from known media organisations during this period asking a range of questions.
- 3.6 We also continue to receive requests about the use of RIPA powers which the Council has responded to.
- 3.7 Unfortunately in the quarter January to March there have been a number of requests that have not been replied to within the statutory deadline emanating from Revenues and Benefits. This has primarily been due to pressure on the service to reduce the backlog of claims as a result of implementing the new computer system, and staff who previously dealt with FOI requests leaving the Council's employment. The situation is being monitored.
- 3.7 The Customer Service Improvement Officer continues to emphasise to departments the need to respond to requests within the statutory time frame. The Head of Legal and Property Services is continuing with her quarterly lunch and learn sessions on the Act to provide a refresher and they are proving very popular. Staff guidance on the intranet for dealing with FOI requests has been reviewed and updated.

### 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

#### 4.1 Financial

The Head of Strategic Finance comments that this report indicates that information is found using existing staff resources. If, in the future, the requests increase in number and/or complexity then it may become necessary to review this situation.

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

The Head of Legal & Property Services comments that ongoing training will be provided across the council to ensure officers are aware of the Council's responsibilities under the Act

4.3 Staffing

Requests are currently being managed within existing resources

4.4 Accommodation

No implications

4.5 Equalities

No implications

4.6 Community Safety

No implications

4.7 Sustainability

No implications

4.8

**Potential Risks**

<b>Potential Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Overall score</b>
Request not replied to within statutory time limit	2	2	4
Those risks scoring 9 or above are considered significant and will need specific attention in project management. They will also be added to the service's Risk Register.			

Appendix 1

Summary of FOI requests October - December 2009

Appendix 2

Summary of FOI requests January – March 2010

Background papers:

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of background papers please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

File:

Freedom of Information response file.