

PART A

Report to: Audit Committee
Date of Meeting 29 June 2017
Report of: Head of Democracy and Governance
Title: Requests made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

1. SUMMARY

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

From 1 October 2016 to 31 March 2017 the Council received 345 requests of which 53 were replied to outside of the required time. A list of the requests is attached at appendix 1

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note the contents of this report.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Carol Chen
telephone extension: 8350 e-mail:carol.chen@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by Managing Director

3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came fully into force on 1st 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 October 2016 to 31 March 2017.
- 3.3 In this period the Council recorded receiving 345 requests for information under the Act of those 53 were replied to outside of the statutory 20 working days.

- 3.4 The requests have been varied. Appendix 1 gives a brief summary of each request. The requests in the spreadsheet headed HCC relate to requests this Council has received where the information requested relates to a county council function and the requester has been informed that they should address their request to HCC.
- 3.5 Since the last report there has been a reorganisation in the Customer Service Centre and the officers who were compiling this information have left the Council. New staff have taken on the role, as members can see some departments have not been regularly updating the database and there are a number which state no information. Departments have been reminded of the importance of having this information logged. Any further inputs will be given by way of an updated spreadsheet provided at the meeting.
- 3.6 The internal auditor has requested that as well as logging Freedom of Information Act requests Environmental Information Regulation requests should also be logged. Training for all customer liaison officers will need to take place to enable this to be implemented. It is hoped that work on this can commence in September.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Financial

The Shared Director of 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 Democracy and Governance comments that ongoing training continues to 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

Potential Risks

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall score
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 2016- March 2017

Background papers:

None