

PART A

Report to: Audit Committee
Date of meeting: 26 July 2018
Report of: Head of Democracy and Governance
Title: Freedom of Information Act Requests 1 October 2017 to 31st March 2018

1.0 Summary

1.1 Between 1 October 2017 and 31st March 2018 the Council received 346 Freedom of Information Act requests. A spreadsheet detailing the requests received is attached as Appendix 1.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
That the request is not replied to within 20 working days of receipt	The council is in breach of the provisions of the Act and a complaint could be made to the Information Commissioner by the requestor	The requests are centrally monitored	Treat	4

3.0 Recommendations

That the report be noted.

Contact Officer:

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4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 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

4.2 This report covers the periods 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2018.

4.3 In this period the Council recorded receiving 346 requests for information under the Act of those 24 were replied to outside of the statutory 20 working days and 15 were not replied to at all. The number of requests is only one fewer than in the same time period last year. Although the number not responded to within the timeframe is a lot less, 39 in total as opposed to 59.

4.4 The requests have been varied. Appendix 1 gives a brief summary of each request. The spreadsheet also shows requests where the information is held by others rather than the Council. Following a recommendation from internal audit Environmental Information Act requests are now shown on the attached Appendix separately

4.5 The Council will be using new customer relationship management software shortly, Firmstep, which will enable all FOI, EIR and Data Subject Access Requests to be logged and monitored. This will replace the current Lagan system which has not been fully functional with regard to FOI logging for some time.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that 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.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in this report

5.3 **Equalities/Human Rights**

5.3.1 No implications

5.4 **Staffing Issues**

5.4.1 Replies are dealt with by individual services and monitored by customer services

Appendices

- Appendix 1 FOI requests 1 October 2017 to 31 March 2018

Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

File Reference

None