

Part A

Report to: Audit Committee

Date of meeting: Thursday, 30 July 2020

Report author: Group Head of Democracy and Governance

Title: Freedom of Information Act Requests October 2019 to March 2020

1.0 Summary

1.1 This is the half yearly report of Freedom of Information Act requests received between 1 October 2019 and 31 March 2020

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Requests are not regularly responded to	Complaint by requestors and investigation and potential sanction by the Information Commissioner	CLOs diarise response times and chase responders	treat	4

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the report be noted.

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4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 Since January 2005 when the Freedom of Information Act 2000 came fully into force the council has been obliged to respond to requests for information. These requests should be responded to within 20 working days of receipt. The Act and public

bodies compliance with it is overseen by the Information Commissioner who can investigate complaints and can compel the disclosure of information as well as impose fines for failure to meet deadlines.

4.2 This committee receives half-yearly reports on the council's performance in replying to such requests.

4.3 For the period 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2020 the council received 339 requests for information, this was slightly higher than the previous half year when the council received 330 requests. Of those, 63 were replied to outside the 20 working day time limit. 29 have not been replied to at all, which is a worsening of performance since the previous half year. A number of these were attributable to Revenues and Benefits where the officer responsible for handling FOIs left. The requests are attached as appendix 1 and, as usual, are wide ranging and varied.

4.4 There was one reported Environmental Information Regulation request in this period.

4.5 The CSC continue to have oversight of FOIs and services are reminded to reply in a timely fashion.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications. Services deal with FOI requests using existing resources.

5.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are legal implications in this report.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

5.3.1 Information is suitably redacted when it contains personal information before responding to requests.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 FOIs are responded to within current staff resources

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 N/A

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 N/A

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 N/A

Appendices

- FOI requests 1 October 2019 to 31 March 2020

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

