

Freedom of Information and Data Protection Report for January to June 2007

Freedom of Information

Although the Panel has only had to spring into action twice so far this year that's not to say there hasn't been any activity. Compared to last year the peak seems to have come a little later and there now always seems to be some outstanding cases awaiting reply. We still maintain our good record of getting replies out within statutory time scales. Many replies are sent within a week and in fact some have been replied to on the same day. We have also received compliments on the service provided.

The Press have made a number of requests during this period, on everything from information on positive racial discrimination in job adverts to zoo inspections. There has been less use by commercial organisations and markedly more by private individuals.

Support from service departments in dealing with requests has been very good.

There has been no activity on the cases we have outstanding with the Information Commissioner, the earliest of which was lodged with them in February 2006 and is still awaiting allocation to a case officer.

Summary of Request	Decision
Details of mobile phone contracts	Partial refusal (details of breakdown of costs withheld Section 43 commercial interest)
Details of complainant on an Planning Enforcement case	Refused Section 40 Data Protection

Data Protection

There has been one formal request, which was dealt with within time scales. A couple of further enquires from the public were dealt with without using the formal procedure. Advice given to staff as required, particularly with regard to the internal re-use of information already held. With the introduction of the new Council Tax computer system the opportunity has been taken to review internal access to the data held and all requests are now accompanied by information on the relevant section of the Act being used to release the information.

General

A start has been made on a review of the policy and procedure notes relating to the two areas to enable them to be brought into one comprehensive document. By the end of the year it is intended that these should be approved and published and an update on training offered to all service areas.