

S36. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002

The committee considered a report by the Chief Governance Officer which provided information requested by the committee on 14 August 2014 (ref S22) in regard to the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) and the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR).

The report provided statistical information for 2012, 2013 and the first two quarters of 2014 and information on charges and time spent on Freedom of Information (FOI) and EIR requests. An update on the work of the Scottish Information Commissioner, the Council's publication scheme and training and development were also provided.

Colin Moodie provided an overview of the report highlighting the increasing numbers of requests and compliance with timescales. Rarely were requests refused on the grounds of cost or fees notices served. In 2013 fees notices were issued in less than 1% of all cases.

Summarising the report, Colin Moodie suggested that there were four points for action and consideration to be taken from the report:-

1. that efforts continue to ensure a high rate of compliance with the response timescales for information requests;
2. work should continue to try to give better information on the source of requests;
3. consideration should be given to more active publication; and
4. better systems and processes should be developed to improve organisational learning from information requests.

The committee asked how many requests were made by politicians. Colin Moodie advised that some information was available for the current year and that requests from elected representatives were 3% of the total.

Decision

The committee continued consideration of whether the subject matter of the report is suitable for inclusion in the Council's scrutiny plan to the next meeting to allow consideration of all the reports requested on 14 August 2014.