

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 12 May 2015

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources & People Services)

SUBJECT: Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and Data Protection Act 1998 – Compliance Statistics

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the Council's compliance with the 20 working day timescale laid down by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 for the period from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015.
- 1.2 To report on the Council's compliance with the 40 calendar day timescale laid down by the Data Protection Act 1998 for the period from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to note the report and for Members to provide feedback on the compliance statistics.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 **Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002** - During the period 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015, East Lothian Council operated in accordance with the statutory requirements, particularly:

Requests for information – to be answered within 20 working days

Requests for review – to be answered within 20 working days by a Chief Officer

If requesters remained dissatisfied after completing this process, then they had a legal right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC).

3.2 Freedom of Information (FOI) statistics are recorded by Licensing, Administration and Democratic Services. Guidance on how to handle information requests, and requests for review, are on the Council's intranet, accessible to all employees.

3.3 The total number of FOI requests received from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015 was **673**, an increase from the previous half year (637). Overall numbers of FOI requests have been increasing steadily since the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 came into force.

This figure includes information requests processed under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR). A split of the FOI and EIR requests is provided at 3.5 of this report.

3.4 The total number of requests for review received from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015 was **16**, an increase from the previous half year (4).

This figure includes reviews processed under the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR). A split of the FOI and EIR reviews is provided at 3.6 of this report.

3.5 Since January 2013, the recording system used has distinguished between FOI requests and requests falling within the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIR). The table below provides a breakdown of the response timescales for both FOI and EIR requests between 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015:

	FOI		EIR	
On time	496	96.5%	85	96.5%
Late	18	3.5%	3	3.5%
Lapsed/Written Off	0		0	
Date of Completion Unknown	0		0	
Cancelled/Withdrawn	7		3	
Suspended	31		4	
Ongoing	22		4	
TOTAL ACTIONED	552		95	

3.6 The table below provides a breakdown of the response timescales for FOI and EIR requests for review between 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015:

	FOI		EIR	
On time: Within 20 Working Days	11	92%	2	67%
Late	1	8%	1	33%
Upheld	2		2	
Partially Upheld	5		0	
Overturned	0		0	
Additional Info Provided	4		1	
Total Received	13		3	
Total Actioned	11		3	
Still Outstanding	2*		0	
Grand Total of Internal Reviews	16			

*At the time of writing this report, of the two outstanding internal reviews, one has missed the 20 working day deadline so has been included in the "Late" figures.

3.7 The top three enquirers were:

- 1) General Public
- 2) Commercial Organisations
- 3) Journalists

3.8 **Data Protection Act 1998** – East Lothian Council operates in accordance with the statutory requirements, particularly:

Requests for personal information ("Subject Access Requests") – to be answered within 40 calendar days

3.9 Data Protection (DP) statistics are recorded by Licensing, Administration and Democratic Services. Guidance on how to handle requests for personal information ("Subject Access Requests") are on the Council's intranet, accessible to all employees.

3.10 The total number of DP "Subject Access Requests" received from 1 October 2014 to 31 March 2015 was **34**, a slight increase from the previous half year (31).

Completed on time (within 40 calendar days)	14	93%
Late	1	6%
Suspended	15	
Withdrawn	1	
Ongoing	3	
Total Actioned	31	

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 This report is not applicable to the well being of equalities groups and an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

AUTHOR'S NAME	Dr Renate Gertz
DESIGNATION	FOI & DP Compliance Officer
CONTACT INFO	X 7993, email: rgertz@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	20 April 2015