

**Council**

21 October 2021

**Agenda Item 50**

Brighton &amp; Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Response to Members Letter- Freedom of Information Requests – Extract from the proceedings of the Audit &amp; Standards Committee meeting held on the 28 September 2021</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>21 October 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance &amp; Law</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>John Peel</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 01273 291058
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****Action Required of Council:**

To receive the report and draft minutes for information.

**Recommendation:**

To note the report.

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**AUDIT & STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**4.00pm 28 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors Moonan (Chair) Hugh-Jones (Group Spokesperson), Meadows (Group Spokesperson), Hamilton, Littman and Shanks

**Independent Members present:** Helen Aston

**PART ONE**

**27 RESPONSE TO MEMBERS LETTER: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS**

- 27.1 The Committee considered a report of the Assistant Director, Human Resources & Organisational Development that provided a response to the request for an officer report detailing key statistics relating to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
- 27.2 In response to questions from Councillor Meadows, it was explained that there was a figure breakdown by department on page 72 of the agenda and page 74 showed the response time according to deadline. In response to the suggestion for a dedicated FOI contact in every council team, it was clarified that there already were organisational contacts depending on the information required. FOI requests often required information from multiple sources and a single person might not have the required access to that information. Furthermore, the council was moving to a digital system that would be more efficient than the current email process and that case management system was currently being trialled with Members. Having a joined up system handling both resident queries, councillor casework and FOI request would enabling better performance monitoring and management.
- 27.3 In response to a question from Councillor Shanks, commercial requests were a high proportion of FOI requests and often related to ascertaining the expiration status of council awarded contracts and the opportunity to bid for those. The legislation meant that the council were obliged to respond to those.
- 27.4 **RESOLVED-** That Audit and Standards committee note the FOI data provided in Appendix 1 (Response to Members Letter Freedom of Information requests.pptx), a summary of which is provided below in section 3.

The meeting concluded at 7.30pm