

## ANNUAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REPORT 2023

### Executive Summary

Following the implementation of the Freedom of Information (FOI) system in October 2018, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to receive an annual update report on all FOIs received.

### Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

**RESOLVE** That the report be noted.

The Committee has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.
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<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
<b>Reporting Person:</b>	Joanne McIntosh, Director of Legal and Democratic Services Email: Joanne.McIntosh@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3038
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Natalie Khan, Democratic Services Officer Email: Natalie.khan@woking.gov.uk , Extn: 3083
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Ann-Marie Barker Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk
<b>Shadow Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Ayesha Azad Email: cllrayesha.azad@woking.gov.uk
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## Freedom Of Information Requests Annual Report

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### 1.0 Yearly Report

- 1.1 The total number of FOI requests received from January – December 2022, are set out below. The figures for 2021 have been included to provide a comparison:

Reporting Period	Total Received	Total Breached	Total Refused
Jan – Dec 2021	632	23	12
Jan – Dec 2022	739	1	16

- 1.2 The total includes figures for FOI referrals, which are requests received intended for other services, including those for Surrey County Council (such as Children Services and Surrey County Highways). With the exception of such referrals, Woking Borough Council Officers responded to all FOI requests received.
- 1.3 The Council strives to ensure that all FOI requests are responded to within the statutory timescale of twenty working days. One response to an FOI exceeded the statutory timescale in 2022.
- 1.4 The progress of individual FOI requests is monitored by the Democratic Services Team. Responsible Officers are sent regular reminders and are contacted directly in the event a week or less remains before the statutory 20 working days is reached.

### 2.0 Monthly Breakdown

- 2.1 Please note that the figures for the breached/refused FOIs are reported in the month they breach/are refused rather than the month they are submitted in. The remaining FOI's are either in the system to be completed or have been responded to in a different format, such as being referred to a different organisation for response or the information was not held.
- 2.2 An FOI request can be refused on the basis of exemptions applied, for example a Section 40(1) "Any information to which a request for information relates is exempt information if it constitutes personal data of which the applicant is the data subject".

Month	Total received	Completed	Refused	Breached
<b>2022</b>				
January	68	66	0	0
February	66	65	0	0
March	55	52	1	0
April	61	60	2	0
May	62	60	1	0
June	69	69	0	0
July	55	55	0	0
August	48	48	0	0
September	102	96	1	0
October	61	58	7	0
November	56	51	2	1
December	36	20	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>

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### 3.0 Breakdown by Department

3.1 Please see the table below that details the FOIs received, broken down by department.

Department	Yearly Total FOIs Received
Democratic Services*	103
Benefits, Revenue and Customer Services	96
Housing	85
Environmental Health	63
HR	44
IT	32
Planning	32
Finance	27
Building Services	27
Legal	24
Green Infrastructure	24
Family Support	18
Parking	17
Recycling/Bins	14
Asset Management	14
Planning Policy	13
Corporate Support	12
Licencing	11
Sports and Leisure	9
Community Safety	9
Marketing	9
Neighbourhood Services	8
Health & Wellbeing	6
Health & Safety/Insurance	5
Engineering Team	4
Building Control	3
Business Liaison	2
Elections	2
Arts	2
Flooding	1

\*The Democratic Services Team will respond to a request where possible and accordingly are responsible for a high proportion of the overall number of responses.

### 4.0 Implications

#### Finance and Risk

4.1 There are no financial or risk implications associated with this report.

#### Equalities and Human Resources

4.2 There are no equalities or human resources implications associated with this report.

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### Legal

- 4.3 The Council is legally obliged to comply with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Responsibility for enforcement of the Act rests with the Information Commissioner's Office which in the first instance can issue enforcement notices for non-compliance/ compel a non-compliant organisation to sign an agreement to take a particular course of action to improve their compliance with the Act.

### **5.0 Engagement and Consultation**

- 5.1 No engagement or consultation was undertaken in preparing this report. However, Officers from the Legal and Democratic Services Teams work closely together and Officers attend the regular meetings of the Surrey Group of FOI Leads.

REPORT ENDS