

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

Decision notice

Date: 3 November 2020

Public Authority: London Borough of Ealing
Address: Percival House
14-16 Uxbridge Road
Ealing
W5 2HL

Decision (including any steps ordered)

1. The complainant requested information from the London Borough of Ealing ("the Council") relating to low traffic neighbourhoods (LTN's).
2. The Commissioner's decision is that the Council has failed to respond to the request within 20 working days and has therefore breached section 10 of the FOIA.
3. The Commissioner requires the Council to take the following steps to ensure compliance with the legislation.
 - Issue a substantive response to the request in accordance with its obligations under the FOIA.
4. The Council must take these steps within 35 calendar days of the date of this decision notice. Failure to comply may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court pursuant to section 54 of the Act and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

Request and response

5. On 3 August 2020, the complainant wrote to the Council and requested information in the following terms:

"Under the freedoms of information act I would like to request the following:

- *Minutes or action points made of all meetings that have taken place regarding LTN's.*
 - *Any correspondence between councillors, council staff and any cabinet members regarding LTN's. By this I mean absolutely everything to do with LTN's.*
 - *Any correspondence relating to the tender and procurement of the necessary materials/planters for LTN's.*
 - *Any correspondence in which emergency services have been consulted on LTN's.*
 - *Correspondence that led to areas being identified/suggested for LTN's.*
 - *A tally of complaints regarding rat runs in areas now subject to LTN's.*
 - *Internal correspondence regarding who decided upon the subject heading 'Lockdown haircut' for the Ealing News Extra in which information of LTN's was hidden.*
 - *All data owned by the council regards cyclist and pedestrian accidents in the areas outlined for LTN's."*
6. The Council wrote to the complainant on 4 August 2020 to acknowledge the request.
7. On 2 September 2020, as the complainant had not received a response, he wrote to the Council and requested an update on the status of his information request.
8. The Council responded to the complainant on 7 September 2020 and apologised for the delay. It explained that due to Covid-19 service pressures, it had a reduced capacity to respond to requests within the statutory timeframes however it stated that it would respond to the complainant's request as soon as possible.

9. The complainant wrote to the Council again on 25 September 2020 and requested an update on his information request as he had not received a response.

Scope of the case

10. The complainant contacted the Commissioner on 30 September 2020 to complain about the Council's failure to respond to his request.
11. The Commissioner contacted the Council on 14 October 2020 reminding it of its responsibilities and asking it to provide a substantive response to the complainant within 10 working days.
12. The Commissioner also contacted the complainant on 14 October 2020 to explain that the Council had been given 10 working days from that date within which to provide a response to his request.
13. The complainant has provided evidence that he has received an acknowledgement from the Council but, by the date of this notice, had not received a substantive response to his information request.
14. The scope of this notice and the following analysis is to consider whether the Council has complied with section 10 of the FOIA.

Reasons for decision

15. Section 10 of the FOIA states that:

Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled –

- (a) To be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and*
- (b) If that is the case, to have that information communicated to him.*

16. The Commissioner considers that the request in question fulfilled the above criteria and therefore constituted a valid request for recorded information under the FOIA.
17. Section 10 of the FOIA states that responses to requests made under the Act must be provided, "*promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt.*"

18. The Council did not provide a substantive response to the request within 20 working days of receipt. Therefore, the Commissioner's decision is that the Council has breached section 10 of the FOIA.

Right of appeal

19. Either party has the right to appeal against this decision notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process may be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)
GRC & GRP Tribunals,
PO Box 9300,
LEICESTER,
LE1 8DJ

Tel: 0300 1234504

Fax: 0870 739 5836

Email: grc@justice.gov.uk

Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber

20. If you wish to appeal against a decision notice, you can obtain information on how to appeal along with the relevant forms from the Information Tribunal website.
21. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this decision notice is sent.

Signed

Ben Tomes
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