

## **FOI COMPLAINTS PROJECT BOARD TUESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2010**

Attendees: Chris Graham (CG), Graham Smith (GS), Simon Entwisle (SE), Steve Wood (SW), Andy Laing (AL), Louise Mottershead - minutes (LM)

### ACTION POINTS

- 1 Terms of Reference were agreed as "To identify and oversee the implementation of improvements to the FOI complaints handling process".

- 2 Complaints handling process to be divided into four main groups:

First Contact – Group 1

Information Gathering – Group 2

Investigation and Decision Notice – Group 3

Enforcement, Case Review and Tribunal – Group 4

#### Group 1

Lead member - Andy Laing

Support – Paul Arnold

#### Group 2

Lead member - Andy Laing

Support – Graham Smith

#### Group 3

Lead member – Graham Smith

Support – Andy Laing

#### Group 4

Lead member – Steve Wood

Support – to be identified

- 3 Lead member of each group to identify participants in January and to arrange schedule of meetings (action – AL, GS and SW).

- 4 Topics to be pursued further in the various groups include:
- Aim to close cases with six months of receipt (KPI 90%)
  - We must be tougher with public authorities around their obligations
  - We should encourage informal resolution between the parties
  - We give Public Authorities one more chance to explain the situation to the complainant
  - We should operate the Right First Time policy and enforce its application appropriately
  - We should make simpler our view of vexatious and frivolous complaints
  - We should make clear to public authorities our expectations of them
  - We should consider the audience when writing our Decision Notices
  - We should aim for plain English, particularly when referencing the law in our Decision Notices
  - We should share our lines to take when asking for more argument in the information gathering stages – revised guidance will help.
  - We have more emphasis on how to avoid the situation from happening again, through feedback
  - We should move away from “partially upheld” as an outcome – explicitly either agree with the actions of the Public Authority or not
  - We should move away from being “unconvinced” by argument – this invites further submissions from the public authority. Better to express a view based on the limited information provided.
  - We should ensure we continue to manage consistency and quality of FOI casework outputs
- 5 Project milestones to be agreed (action – AL and GS).
- 6 ICON link to FOI Complaints Project to be created and introductory information posted on ICON main page (action - AL)
- 7 Action points from each meeting to be posted onto FOI Complaints Project page (action – LM).

8 Project Board to be in existence for approximately six months. Meetings scheduled after June 2011 to be cancelled (action – LM).

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9 CG to attend January Signatory Board and meetings thereafter if required (action – LM).

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10 Investigate prioritisation of training needs post PDR Process in light of the FOI agenda (action – CG).

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Date of next meeting: Monday 10 January 2011 at 1530hrs