

NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

19 JANUARY 2007

Agenda Item	
Report No	

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT 2002 IMPLEMENTATION

Report by the Chief Constable

SUMMARY

To update Board Members on the implementation of the requirement of Freedom of Information (FOI) Legislation within Northern Constabulary.

BACKGROUND:

Members will recall that a report was submitted to the meeting of the Northern Joint Police Board in August 2006 which provided a breakdown of staff time involved in dealing with FOI requests, details of the nature of requests received and an indication of the costs involved in providing the information.

A breakdown of the source of requests for the period 1 January to 31 July 2006 was also provided in the Report.

The purpose of this Report is to provide Board Members with a brief update on the final position for the full year in respect of requests received under FOI legislation.

Breakdown of Requests for Information

For the period 1 January to 31 December 2006, Northern Constabulary was asked a total of 982 FOI questions which represents approximately an 80% increase over the period 1 January to 31 December 2005.

In terms of the source of requests, the breakdown for 2006 was as follows:-

Media	619 questions asked representing	63% of the total
MPs & MSPs	65 questions asked representing	7% of the total
Private Individuals	227 questions asked representing	23% of the total
Solicitors	41 questions asked representing	4% of the total
Business Sector/Public Bodies	30 questions asked representing	3% of the total.

Costs

As indicated in the paper submitted to the Board in August 2006, the costs incurred by the Force in complying with the requirements of FOI legislation cannot be outlined in exact terms. This is because the Force does not have in place a system for formally measuring the amount of time which staff throughout the organisation spend in undertaking FOI related activities. However, at the time the previous paper was written it was estimated that the full year cost to the Force would be in the region of £135,000.

With the full year activity levels for 2006 now to hand, the initial expenditure estimate has been revised to £125,000. This figure is broken down into two main elements as follows:-

£65,000 - Administration and salary costs

£60,000 - Time and effort involved by staff in Service Units and Area Commands on FOI related activities.

RECOMMENDATION

The Board is invited to note the report.
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I Latimer
Chief Constable