

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (Section 51)

Information notice

Date: 2 July 2025

Public Authority: London Borough of Redbridge
Address: Lynton House
255-259 High Road
Ilford
IG1 1NY

Section 51

Under section 51 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), which is set out below, the Information Commissioner (the Commissioner) has the power to serve a notice on a public authority requiring it to furnish him with any information he requires to enforce the requirements of FOIA.

51. – (1) If the Commissioner –

(a) has received an application under section 50, ...

he may serve the authority with a notice (in FOIA referred to as “an information notice”) requiring it, within such time as is specified in the notice, to furnish the Commissioner, in such form as may be so specified, with such information relating to the application, to compliance with Part I or to conformity with the code of practice as is so specified.

Application under section 50

1. The Commissioner has received four separate applications under section 50, references IC-356463-L5H6, IC-374420-R7X2, IC-364257-X2Q0 and IC-374451-T4B4 for decisions as to whether requests for information made by the complainant to the London Borough of Redbridge (the

Council) on 2 September, 11 October, 18 October and 24 October 2024 respectively have been dealt with in accordance with the requirements of Part I of FOIA.

Nature of complaint

Commissioner's reference IC-356463-L5H6 / Council reference 23837929

2. The complainant submitted the following request to the Council on 2 September 2024:

"I seek under the environmental regulations, or Freedom of Information law, if you say environmental regulations do not apply, the following information:

- 1) The rental address of properties owned by Cllr Athwal, these were previously disclosed, but have now been removed from the Council Website.
 - 2) All correspondence between Redbridge Council and Councillor Athwal regarding landlord property licences for all the rental properties owned by Cllr Athwal in Redbridge"
3. The Council responded on 6 November 2024. It confirmed that it held information falling within the scope of part 1 of the request but it considered this to be exempt from disclosure on the basis of section 32(2) of the Localism Act 2011. In relation to part 2 of the request the Council refused to confirm or deny whether it held the requested information on the basis of sections 40(5A) and (5B) (personal data) of FOIA.
 4. The complainant contacted the Council on the same day and asked it to conduct an internal review of this response.
 5. The Council informed him of the outcome of the review on 30 December 2024. This upheld the application of the exemptions cited in the refusal notice.

Commissioner's reference IC-374420-R7X2 / Council reference 24456217

6. The complainant submitted the following request to Council on 11 October 2024:

"Copies of all correspondence between Cllr Athwal's managing agents and Redbridge Council from the 1st January 2024 to the 10th October 2024 under the environmental information regulations or if you say these do not apply then then freedom of information regulations."

7. The Council responded on 18 November 2024 and refused to confirm or deny whether it held the requested information on the basis of section 40(5B) of FOIA.
8. The complainant contacted the Council on the same day and asked it to conduct an internal review of this request.
9. The Commissioner understands that the internal review was not completed.

Commissioner's reference IC-364257-X2Q0 / Council reference 24558362

10. The complainant submitted the following request to the Council on 18 October 2024:

"I seek the dates of when Cllr Jas Athwal 15 rental properties located in Redbridge were inspected under the Redbridge Council landlord licensing scheme. To be clear, I only seek the dates of the inspections not the contents of the inspection reports.

The period I seek is from the inception of the scheme until 17th October 2024."

11. The Council responded to the request on 22 November 2024. It refused to confirm or deny whether it held the information on the basis of section 30(3) (investigations) of FOIA.
12. The complainant contacted the Council on the same day and asked it to conduct an internal review.
13. The Commissioner understands that the internal review was not completed.

Commissioner's reference IC-374451-T4B4 / Council reference 24670698

14. The complainant submitted the following request to the Council on 24 October 2024:

"I seek all emails from senior staff about whether an investigation into whether Cllr Athwal should be commenced about him not holding a landlord licence as reported by the BBC earlier this year."

15. The Council responded to the request on 18 November 2024 and refused to confirm or deny whether it held the request information on the basis of sections 30(3) and 40(5B) of FOIA.
16. The complainant contacted the Council on 22 November 2024 in order to ask for an internal review.
17. The Commissioner understands that the internal review was not completed.

The complainant's grounds of complaint – all cases

18. In his grounds of complaint submitted to the Commissioner the complainant explained that he disputed the Council's refusal of each of the four requests.

The Commissioner's interactions with the Council – all cases

19. Following the allocation of these cases to the Commissioner's case officer, he contacted the Council on 16 May 2025 about all four cases. The Commissioner set out the questions he required the Council to respond to in relation to each case. The Commissioner asked for a response to his letter within 10 working days, ie by 2 June 2025.
20. The Council contacted the Commissioner on 4 June 2025 in relation to case reference IC-374420-R7X2 only. It acknowledged receipt of the email the Commissioner had sent on 7 April 2025 notifying the Council that this complaint had been received, and explained that as this complaint had been received it would not conduct an internal review but would wait to receive further communication from the Commissioner.
21. The Commissioner responded on 4 June 2025 and confirmed that this case had been allocated for investigation, and moreover, that the Commissioner had contacted the Council on 16 May 2025 about this, and the three linked cases, referred to in this notice. (The Commissioner provided the Council a further copy of his letter of 16 May.) The Commissioner asked the Council to confirm whether it received that letter, and for an update on its progress in replying to it noting that the deadline for a response was 2 June 2025.

22. Having failed to receive a response, the Commissioner contacted the Council on 16 June 2025 and explained that if a substantive response was not received in relation all four cases by 23 June 2025 he would issue an Information Notice.
23. The Council responded on 19 June 2024, apologised for the delay and explained that it would respond by 23 June 2025.
24. However, to date the Commissioner has not received a substantive response from the Council to his letter of 16 May 2025.

Information required

25. In view of the matters described above the Commissioner hereby gives notice that in the exercise of his powers under section 51 of FOIA he requires that the Council shall, within 30 calendar days of the date of this notice, furnish the Commissioner with a copy of the following information:
 - A full and complete response to all of the questions set out in his letter of 16 May 2025 in relation to complaints IC-356463-L5H6, IC-374420-R7X2, IC-364257-X2Q0 and IC-374451-T4B4.

Failure to comply

26. Failure to comply with the steps described above may result in the Commissioner making written certification of this fact to the High Court (or the Court of Session in Scotland) pursuant to section 54 of FOIA, and may be dealt with as a contempt of court.

Right of appeal

27. There is a right of appeal against this information notice to the First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights). Information about the appeals process can be obtained from:

First-tier Tribunal (Information Rights)
General Regulatory Chamber
PO Box 11230
Leicester
LE1 8FQ

Tel: 0203 936 8963
Fax: 0870 739 5836
Email: grc@Justice.gov.uk
Website: www.justice.gov.uk/tribunals/general-regulatory-chamber

28. Any Notice of Appeal should be served on the Tribunal within 28 (calendar) days of the date on which this information notice is sent. If Notice of Appeal is served late the Tribunal will not accept it unless it is of the opinion that it is just and right to do so by reason of special circumstances.

Signed by

Jonathan Slee
Senior Case Officer
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF