

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET30th October 2025Report by Chief ExecutiveFREEDOM OF INFORMATION - COUNCIL PERFORMANCE 2024-25**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the annual statistical report on the Council's performance in dealing with requests under Freedom of Information.

RECOMMENDATION

2. It is recommended that Cabinet notes the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND

3. Freedom of Information provides a statutory right of access to information held by Scottish public authorities.
4. Statistical reports on how the Council has dealt with information requests have been presented to Cabinet on an annual basis since the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 came into force in 2005.

REPORT

5. The Council received 1,336 requests during this period, 791 under Fol(S)A and 545 under the related Environmental Information Regulations (Scotland).

PUBLICATION

6. This report will be published on the Council's website.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

7. There are no particular financial implications arising from this report.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

8. As this report is primarily a performance update, there are no particular implications in terms of staffing, property, legal, IT, equalities or sustainability.

RECOMMENDATION

9. It is recommended that the Cabinet notes the contents of this report.

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Freedom of Information

Report on information requests received 2024-2025

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1 Introduction

This report considers the volume of information requests received in the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 and details performance across East Renfrewshire Council in processing these requests. It also looks at changes to processes and considers the use of exemptions, fees, reviews and appeals.

The Freedom of Information (Fol) (Scotland) Act 2002 and the associated Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) 2004 provide a statutory right of access to information held by Scottish public authorities. Fol encourages openness and accountability and helps to build trust between the Council and the public that we serve.

2 Progress and Development

Work on service improvement has continued throughout the year. Training on Fol and EIR has been delivered through the corporate training calendar, ad hoc sessions, and an online module. More information is available through proactive disclosure and improvements have been made in the GOSS Customer Relationship Management system. A “resource base” of review determinations has been established on the Fol Teams site.

3 Volume of requests

East Renfrewshire Council received 1336 information requests in 2024-25, compared to 1420 received in the previous year. As detailed in figure 1 below this total represents a decrease of 6% on the previous year.

This total comprised 791 requests under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and 545 requests under the Environmental Information Regulations (Scotland) 2004.

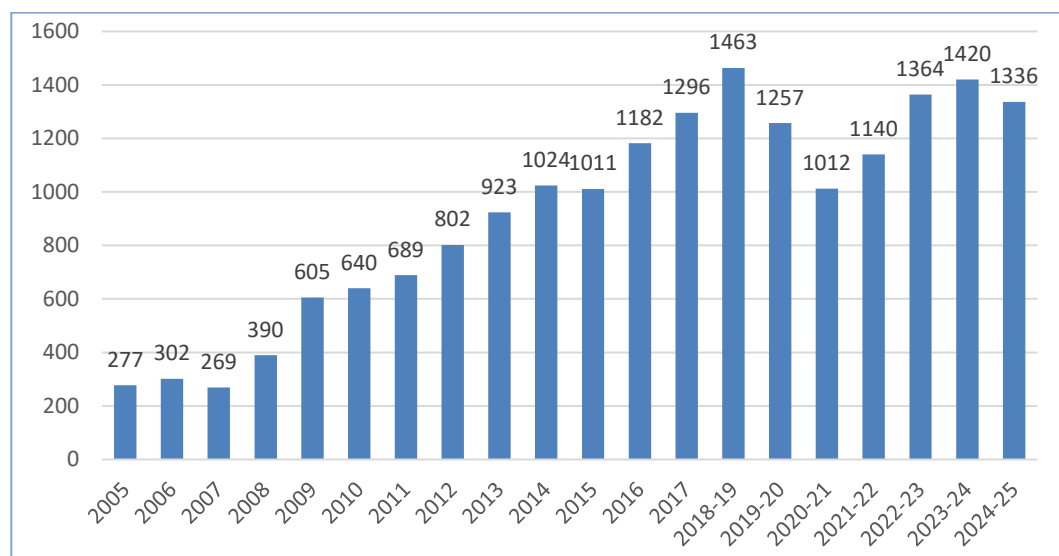


Figure 1

4 Performance

93% of requests received during the period of this report were answered within the statutory 20 working days and the average response time was 12.7 working days. These figures, with comparisons from previous years, are given in Figure 2. Details of performance for individual departments, the Trust and the HSCP are detailed in Figure 3.

FoI performance: Council-wide	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Percentage of requests answered within timescale	82%	80%	85%	93%	90%	93%
Average response time (in working days)	13.7	15.1	13.7	12.4	12.8	12.7

Figure 2

FoI performance: by department	Number of requests	Percentage of requests answered within timescale (20 working days)	Average response time (working days)
Business Operations & Partnerships	261	94%	14
Chief Executive's Office	62	95%	12
Education Department	235	96%	13
Environment Department	542	90%	12
Health and Social Care Partnership	126	89%	16
Culture and Leisure Trust	24	100%	10
Cross Departmental	86	98%	9

Figure 3

There can be various reasons for requests not always being answered on time. For example, a request might require information from schools during holidays, performance can be impacted by absence of key staff or changes in personnel, or there may be difficulties in collating responses to more complex requests.

According to the statistics collated by the Scottish Information Commissioner the proportion of requests answered on time by Local Authorities across Scotland during the period covered by this report was 86% (the figure for the previous year was 90%).

5 Exemptions

The majority of requests (88%) resulted in full disclosure of the information sought, with partial disclosures in a further 9% of requests. However, certain information is exempt from disclosure under the legislation. FoI exemptions and EIR exceptions applied, in order of frequency of use, are detailed in Figure 4.

It should be noted that most “refusals” are “refused” only because the information sought is not held or because it is otherwise available.

Exemptions/Exceptions		Number. of times cited
S.17, Reg.10(4)a	Information not held	84
S.25, Reg.6(1)b	Information otherwise available	19
S.38, Reg.11	Personal information	15
S.12	Excessive cost of compliance	15
S.35, Reg.10(5)b	Law Enforcement	3
S.33, Reg.10(5)e	Commercial interests and the economy	2
S.30(c)	Conduct of public affairs	2
S.26	Prohibited by enactment	1
S.27, Reg. 10(4)d	Future publication or draft information	1
S.34	Investigations	1
S.14	Vexatious or repeated	1
S.18	Neither confirm nor deny	1
S.31	National Security	1

Figure 4

Note:

- There have been a number of occasions on which more than one exemption was applied. The total number of exemptions noted, therefore, does not correspond with the total number of requests to which an exemption was applied.

6 Fees

During the period of this report, the Council refused 15 requests on the grounds that answering them would exceed the statutory cost ceiling and 2 fee notices were issued.

7 Reviews and Appeals

Of the 1336 information requests received, the applicant formally asked the Council to review its decision on 27 occasions. These reviews were determined as detailed in Figure 5. If the applicant remains dissatisfied after the internal review, they have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. Appeals determined in 2024-25 are detailed in Figure 6.

Requests for reviews 2024/25	
Number of requests for reviews	27
...of which the review upheld the department's original decision	9
...of which the review partially upheld the original decision	11
...of which the review overturned the department's original decision	7

Figure 5

Appeals Resolved 2024/25	
Number of appeals	2
Appeal upheld by Commissioner	2

Figure 6

8 Conclusion

Freedom of Information remains an important element of East Renfrewshire Council's commitment to transparency and accountability. It provides an efficient means for the public to access information about the services that the Council provides, and the Council remains committed to delivering a positive and efficient customer experience.

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October 2025

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