**APPENDIX FOUR**

**Charging for information**

1. There are a number of occasions when cost and fees may be applied to information requests.
2. Any fee charged will be in accordance with the Authority’s Charging for Information Policy (see below) and calculated in accordance with the guidelines and recommendations of the Information Commissioners Office.
3. Requesters will be sent a ‘fees notice’ which will have to paid within three months of the request – the requester will not receive information until they have paid the costs in the fees notice.
4. However, the Authority will inform the requester if the limit will be exceeded and we will try to let you know what can be provided within the limit. Despite not being obliged to provide information which exceeds the limit, the Authority will still be under a duty to advise and assist.
5. In order to protect the Authority there will be rules which govern multiple applications for information which are clearly trying to avoid the financial limits set by the government. However, we will try to help you as much as possible to get the information you want.

**Charging for Information Policy**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Freedom of Information** **Costs and Fees** | **Environmental Information Regulations****Costs and Fees** |
| The fees regulations for the Freedom of Information Act reflect the Government’s approach that there should be no financial barrier to people in exercising their rights under the legislation, and that there is a clear expectation that there will be no charges for the vast majority of requests.The main points of the fees regulations are:* A request can be refused only if the cost for searching and collation exceeds £450. The figure of £450 equates £25.00 per hour of staff time.
* In calculating whether answering the request would exceed the £450 limit, the following costs can be taken into account:
* Determining whether the information is held,
* Locating and retrieving it, and
* Extracting the information (including editing)
* The Authority cannot take into account the costs of considering whether the information is exempt under the Act.
* The Authority cannot take into account the time it may take to redact the information.
* If the request will cost less than the £450 limit, and there is no exemption that is engaged, then the Authority will answer the request.
* The only charges that will be made will be for any postage, printing and photocopying.
* The Authority determines these costs to be:
* Photocopying/print A4 (black and white) per page – 10p
* Photocopying/print A4 (colour) per page – 15p
* Photocopying/print A3 (black and white) per page- 20p
* Photocopying/print A3 (colour) per page – 30p
* Email - Free of charge
* CD/DVD - £1.00 plus postage costs

Postage (as of August 2014)Size and Weight limits

|  | **MaxWeight** | **MaxLength** | **MaxWidth** | **MaxThickness** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter** | 100g | 240mm | 165mm | 5mm |
| **Large Letter** | 750g | 353mm | 250mm | 25mm |

Prices

|  | **Weight** | **Price** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter** | 0-100g | 62p |
| **Large Letter** | 0-100g | 93p |
| 101-250g | £1.24 |
| 251-500g | £1.65 |
| 501-750g | £2.38 |

\*International postage will be determined on a case by case basis* If the postage, printing and copying costs are low, the Authority will not make a charge.
* If the cost of answering the request is more than £450 then the Authority can chose to charge a fee. The maximum fees that can charge will the total estimated costs of:
* Determining whether the Authority holds the information, locating and retrieving it, and the extracting the information from any document containing it,
* Informing the requestor the Authority holds the information, and then communicating it (by means of postage, printing and photocopying – or other appropriate means)
* There is also a general duty under the Act for the Authority to provide advice and assistance, and if the cost of complying would exceed £450, and are required to assist the requestor in modifying their request to reduce the cost.
* Examples should be given, if possible on what information can be provided.
* If the applicant does not agree with the proposed fee, they can appeal to the Information Commissioner.
 | The EIR allows the Authority to make a charge for environmental information providing it is reasonable. Unlike Freedom of Information there is no upper limit. * In practice the Authority will not charge for requests under EIR that take less than 18 hours to research and collate.
* For requests over 18 hours the Authority will contact the requester to discuss options which may include requesting a fee or working to revise the request.
* As for FOI, the Authority reserves the right to charge for costs e.g. photocopying.
* The Authority determines these costs to be:
* Photocopying/print A4 (black and white) per page – 10p
* Photocopying/print A4 (colour) per page – 15p
* Photocopying/print A3 (black and white) per page- 20p
* Photocopying/print A3 (colour) per page – 30p
* Email - Free of charge
* CD/DVD - £1.00 plus postage costs

Postage (as of August 2014)Size and Weight limits

|  | **MaxWeight** | **MaxLength** | **MaxWidth** | **MaxThickness** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter** | 100g | 240mm | 165mm | 5mm |
| **Large Letter** | 750g | 353mm | 250mm | 25mm |

Prices

|  | **Weight** | **Price** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter** | 0-100g | 62p |
| **Large Letter** | 0-100g | 93p |
| 101-250g | £1.24 |
| 251-500g | £1.65 |
| 501-750g | £2.38 |

\*International postage will be determined on a case by case basis* If the postage, printing and copying costs are low, the Authority will not make a charge.
* If the Authority is going to charge a fee (because the request will take over 18 hours), the charge will be £25.00 per hour (the same rate as for FOI).
* The Authority will send the requester a fees notice and they will then have 60 days to pay. If the requester refuses to pay the fee, the Authority can refuse to supply the information.
* Some environmental information is held on registers and other forms that make it possible for the requester to view it at the Authority’s offices. In this case, there is no charge (The Authority may still charge for copies).
* Public authorities cannot charge applicants for inspecting the information or accessing public registers or lists of environmental information.
 |