

OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION COMMISSIONER — OFFICE PROCEDURES

3266. Hon Giz Watson to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Attorney General

I refer to the 2009-2010 Annual Report of the Office of the Information Commissioner, especially at page 30, and ask —

- (1) Regarding the Information Commissioner's statement that a considerable portion of his office's resources are spent dealing with complaints relating to section 20 of the Act, (the work involved in dealing with an application), what steps have been taken by the Government to implement his recommendation that there be early and better communication between agencies and applicants to clarify the specific documents and information sought?
- (2) If the answer to (1) is none, what is the reason for this?
- (3) Regarding the Information Commissioner's statement that a number of Agencies, particularly Ministers, are routinely giving misconceived advice to applicants that the time for dealing with large applications is suspended until the applicant reduces the scope of the application, what steps have been taken by the Government to end this practice?
- (4) If the answer to (3) is none, what is the reason for this?
- (5) Regarding the Information Commissioner's statement that Agencies (including Ministers) need to set out in their freedom of information files the specific searches and inquiries they have made for the requested documents so that these need not be recalled if the decision is later subjected to external review, what if any steps have been taken by the Government to implement this recommendation?
- (6) If the answer to (5) is none, what is the reason for this?
- (7) Has there been any formal or information communication from the Information Commissioner regarding any need for an increased budget next financial year?
- (8) If yes to (7), will you please provide the details?

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:

- (1)-(6) Not applicable.
- (7)-(8) As budget bids need to be considered by Cabinet or its committees, the existence or content of any such communication would be subject to Cabinet confidentiality.