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Ms H Brooke

11th May 2005

Reference: FS50069105

Dear Ms Brooke

Freedom of Information Complaint
Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers

Thank you for your letter dated 24th March detailing your complaint about the handling of your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act by the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

In view of the large number of overlapping complaints which the Commissioner has received, some for the advice itself, others for related information, the Commissioner decided to consolidate the complaints into a single investigation.

Now that the government has published the Attorney General's written advice of 7 March 2003, the Commissioner does not propose to consider further the question of whether or not the content of that advice should have been published, whether in full or in part. However, he continues to investigate the refusal of the various requests for information relating to the advice provided by the Attorney General with the aim of making a determination of all of the issues which have been raised by the complaints.

A number of complainants have expressed their disappointment at the length of time it has taken the Commissioner to conclude the cases before him. Although it is not possible to give a target date for the completion of this process, the Commissioner has asked me to assure all complainants that he is keen to bring these matters to a conclusion as soon as possible while, at the same time, ensuring that all the relevant factors have been properly considered. This will clearly include considering whether there are any new issues that ought to be addressed as a result of the publication of the advice of 7 March 2003.



It is the Commissioner's intention that, once his consideration of the various complaints has been concluded, he will write to all complainants setting out his conclusions and explaining any steps that he may require to be taken.

Earlier this year, the Commissioner and the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs signed an agreement on co-operation between government Departments and the Information Commissioner in relation to complaints under section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. The Commissioner has asked me to emphasise the fact that the level of cooperation provided by the Cabinet Office has met the standard set out in this agreement. He is confident that he will receive the same levels of cooperation in the future.

Finally the Commissioner has asked me to thank you for your patience. We will, of course, contact you again when there are further matters to report on.

Yours sincerely



Phil Boyd
Assistant Commissioner