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FOI Request No: 2009-015643

31 July 2009

Dear Heather Brooke,

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION, MARKETING AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS (FOI Request No: 2009-015643)**

Thank you for your request for information received on 28<sup>th</sup> July relating to freedom of information, marketing and external communications. Your request is being handled in accordance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

Your request refers to the "Department" and for avoidance of doubt we will be responding as The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (SPCB).

To enable us to respond to your request we would be grateful if you could provide clarification to the following:

- In questions 1, 3 and 5 you refer to 'external communications'. We need clarification of what you mean by this. It is a founding aim of the Scottish Parliament that we encourage and develop public awareness of and engagement with the parliamentary process. We have always strived to make sure that as many people as possible know how to get involved with and influence their Parliament. We have a strong programme of engagement activities designed to help people take part in the democratic process, which include a programme of school visits and educational based activities with difficult to reach audiences. This goes well beyond the narrower activity of the Parliament advertising specific activities for general public participation such as exhibitions and events like our Festival of Politics.

We would be grateful if you would clarify whether by the term 'external communications' you are seeking the costs and staffing for our very extensive engagement programme which involves activities in the vast majority of the offices in the Scottish Parliament or if you are referring more specifically to our narrower activities which include dedicated advertising of Scottish Parliament events and activities.

- In question 2 you ask for the number of dedicated Freedom of Information Officers. We would like clarification as to whether you are interested only in staff in our Freedom of Information team in SPICe (our Information Centre), who have this as a substantive part of their role, rather than purely administrative support staff, throughout the organisation, who may periodically assist with a specific request. Or would you wish us to include temporary administrative staff engaged purely for FOI purposes; for example we employed a temporary member of staff in 2008 to photocopy and scan documents to reply to a significant number of large freedom of information requests?
- In questions 3 and 4 you ask for staff costs and we would like to clarify if this refers to staff salaries only, or salaries plus on-costs such as pension, national insurance etc or indeed staff costs combined with staff-related costs such as training, travel etc?
- In question 6 you ask for the total spend on freedom of information and we would like to check if this refers to the total cost of processing freedom of information requests or whether, given question 4, it should exclude the costs of dedicated FOI staff?
- In question 7 you have asked if a newsletter is produced and we would like to clarify if you are referring to a freedom of information newsletter (we produce a periodic internal e-mail newsletter on freedom of information) or if you are referring to marketing literature provided to advertise special events and activities in the parliament or if you mean all publications, literature and pamphlets provided to inform and engage with the public in Scotland to underpin our engagement activities.

In terms of the period of time you would like us to cover in our reply, you have requested the information for the past three years up until the date when the request is answered. In order to provide the information in a financially consistent way, (as requested) we intend to provide the information covering the first three financial months of 2009 i.e. April to June, together with annual figures for the period covered by the previous three financial years, 2006-2007, 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

The statutory 20 working day period for reply will begin once we have received sufficient clarification from you to reply to your request.

In replying to this letter it would be helpful if you could quote the FOI request number above.

Yours sincerely

Steven Tallach  
FOI Officer