

15 December 2009

Mr T Jones
request-23776-3a642df1@whatdotheyknow.com

FOI Ref: FOI09-0123 RESP

Dear Mr Jones,

Re. your request for information received 28 Nov 2009 which we have replicated below, for ease of reference.

You wrote: *“Could you please provide me with details of any audits, including any related emails, undertaken or commissioned by Advantage West Midlands into the expenditure of North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership ie, in relation to procurement, agency, interim management or consultants. Could you provide this information for 2007, 2008 and 2009.”*

I am writing to confirm that Advantage West Midlands holds information relevant to your request and that we have now completed the process of recovering emails and compiling relevant information which is either incorporated into the Agency’s response or is attached as an electronic file.

The Agency’s response follows: I can advise that Advantage West Midlands has undertaken one audit of North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership (NSRP) within the stated period and in fact, the work relating to this is still underway.

As part of routine monitoring Advantage West Midlands’ Internal Audit team initiated the process to review systems at NSRP in November 2008. It was identified that the Audit Commission was also due to review NSRP and therefore we attempted to work alongside them in order to minimise disruption. Due to differences in the scope of our respective reviews this approach did not fully meet our requirements, so after a short delay our Internal Audit team commenced the review in February 2009.

Preliminary findings from the review led to the Agency commissioning a more detailed independent audit which we then procured from KPMG, who were engaged to conduct the audit on our behalf. This work commenced in May 2009 and the final report in June 2009 recommended improvements in process and procedures and an Improvement Action Plan was agreed with NSRP. The Action Plan is being implemented by NSRP and KPMG will revisit NSRP in January 2010 to review progress.

The information to be released includes certain documents which KPMG LLP prepared under terms of engagement agreed with Advantage West Midlands.

Under s40 of the Act, information that may contravene any of the eight principles in the Data Protection Act (DPA) is exempt. We consider that the disclosure of certain personal data would

contravene Data Protection Principle 1 – the obligation to process personal data fairly and lawfully. This is based on the reasonable expectations of those concerned that their personal data in this context would remain private. Accordingly, where emails have been provided, selected third party names have been redacted as we consider that disclosure of such names would contravene Data Protection Principle 1.

Please refer to the attached documents which include:

1. Executive summary of the Procurement and Staff Recruitment Review of North Staffordshire Regeneration Partnership: and
2. Emails in relation to the above report (excluding names and contact details of KPMG staff)

Please note the following statement in regard to the release of the documents outlined above:

“These documents are not suitable to be relied on by any party wishing to acquire rights against KPMG LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any party that obtains access to these documents or copies and chooses to rely on these documents (or any part of them) does so at its own risk.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, KPMG LLP does not assume any responsibility and will not accept any liability in respect of these documents to any party other than the original addressee(s).”

If you have any queries about our response please contact me quoting the reference FOI09-0123.

Under the Freedom of Information Act you have the right of complaint. If you are not satisfied with the way we have handled your request, or if you are unhappy with our response, you may appeal via our Complaints Procedure, a copy of which is attached. If you are still dissatisfied after pursuing our Complaints Procedure, then under Section 50 of the Act, you are entitled to appeal to the Information Commissioner (Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, telephone: 01625 545700, fax: 01625 524510).

Yours sincerely

Vera Giles
Corporate Information & Records Manager
Advantage West Midlands
Direct Dial Telephone: 0121 503 3217
Fax: 0121 380 3501
Email: veragiles@advantagewm.co.uk