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**Complaints, Members
Enquiries & Freedom of
Information**

Mr Martin Warne
[request-164007-
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Ask for: Information
Governance

Your ref :

Our ref: FOI/ E15688

Date: 04.07.2013

Complaints, Members Enquiries &
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Dear Mr Warne,

Freedom of Information Act 2000
Request for Information: Information Provided
Please quote our reference: E15688
Subject: Social Media Monitoring

We write with regard to your recent enquiry for information held by the Council under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

We trust that the information provided is satisfactory. You are free to use the information for your personal use only. Any other type of re-use, for example, publishing the information or issuing copies to the public will require permission of the copyright owner. If the Council is the copyright owner, a licence can be applied for under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005.

For future reference we publish information on our website, including the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme and summary of Freedom of Information requests and responses that may be of help to you in searching for information. Our website is mentioned above.

It is important to note that under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 the Council asks not to receive unsolicited marketing communication.

Request and Response

On June 5th the BBC reported on its website that YouTube has removed "dozens of videos promoting gang violence after a request" from Newham council.

The report, which quotes the mayor directly, states that the council has created a special unit within its enforcement team to "trace videos it believes could be used to recruit new gang members."

It says that the scheme has been running since January this year and that officers have identified about 500 videos and 76 of them have so far been removed by YouTube.

In relation to this, could you please provide the following information, which I am requesting under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000:

1. How many officers have been involved in this team? Please provide both headcount and number of full-time equivalents.

The BBC reported that a special unit has been created. This is inaccurate and the BBC has been advised by the Council of their mistake. The Council issued a press release on the initiative which may be of help:

<http://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/News/Newham-takes-fight-against-violent-crime-online.aspx>

Two members of staff are involved but this equated to zero full time equivalent as the work was not undertaken on a full time basis.

2. Were these officers new hires or transferred to this unit from other duties?

No new or additional staff were hired or transferred from other teams. The work was undertaken as part of their general duties as and when required.

3. If they were transferred from other duties, what provision has been made to cover those duties?

Please see our response to Question 2. No additional staffing costs were incurred.

4. How much time has been spent on this project? Please provide the total number of employee hours.

We do not hold this information. As the work was undertaken as part of general duties, it was not recorded separately for reporting purposes.

5. What has this cost, from the start to date? Please include salary, other employment costs (e.g. employer's NI, pension contributions), allocated office costs (cost of desk space, heat, light etc), and any additional equipment costs (such as new PCs, laptops) for the officers involved. Please also state separately any costs for additional staff hired to cover the duties of officers transferred into this unit.

Please see our response to Question 2

The work was undertaken as part of general duties, it was and is not a substantial or significant part of their work. No additional staffing costs were incurred.

6. Who initiated this programme? Who, or which committee, approved the plan and the associated expenditure? Please provide a copy of the minutes or a URL from which they can be downloaded from your website.

The work was initiated as part of the ongoing joint work between the Council, Police and other partners in successfully reducing serious youth violence. The decision to undertake the work was an operational management decision and as detailed no additional resources or expenditure was requested.

7. How many YouTube videos in total have the officers watched?

Since January 2012, 500 clips have been examined. Of these 76 were removed because of explicit use of threats.

8. Do they watch videos from other services in addition to YouTube?

No . A Twitter account that was linked to the production of videos was viewed and reported.

9. Aside from watching videos, do these officers have any other duties in regard to monitoring Internet content?

No

10. How are the activities of this team supervised?

The activities of the staff involved are monitored as part of the normal supervisory and management arrangements in place.

11. What criteria are applied to videos to determine whether to request their deletion? Please provide a copy of any guidelines or briefings issued to officers in this unit.

The criteria applied are the ones published by You Tube and can be found on their site at http://www.youtube.com/t/community_guidelines

12. What reasons did YouTube give for declining to delete videos?

You Tube did not consider that the videos breached You Tube Community Guidelines.

13. What was the total number of views on YouTube for the videos that have now been deleted at Newham's request?

A total of 76 videos were deleted at Newham Council's request. There were 2,001,406 views on You Tube of the relevant videos.

14. What were the expected benefits of this project at the outset and what metrics will be used to evaluate its success (or otherwise)?

The expected benefits are that the deleted videos promoting gang violence will no longer be viewed.

No metrics will be used to evaluate, as the successful outcome of removal of the videos is self evident.

15. Is there a projected end date for this project?

Not at present.

If you require any further information or are not happy with our response please do not hesitate to contact a member of our team on (020) 8430 2000 or email us at information.governance@newham.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Complaints, Members Enquiries and Information Governance
Newham Council