

Mr Jonathon Bartlett

ICT Support Officer
Email: replytoxxxx@xxxxxx.xxx.x:
Date: 21 January 2020

Our reference: 3396225

Dear Mr Bartlett

Freedom of Information Act 2000

This request is being handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Your Request

I request the below information under the provisions of FOI 2000. Information indicated that the Coroner's Office has been affected by a 'cyber attack' at some point since May 2019. I therefore request the below:-

- Can you confirm if a cyber-related 'attack' has been attempted or indeed been successful which has affected the Coroner's Office?
- Was any data breached or 'stolen' as a result of this attack?
- Has any 'cyber attack' on any external service provider to the Coroner's Office affected the Office itself?

Response

With regard to your questions, this information is exempt under Section 31 (1) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

S31 (1) (a) allows public authorities to withhold information if it considers that doing so would prejudice the prevention or detection of crime. We believe that if we were to provide details about the Council's cyber security software it would provide the opportunity for members of the general public to breach Sefton Council's ICT security.

When applying this exemption we must also consider a public interest test.

The factors in favour of disclosing this information are:

- The Council is aware of openness and transparency running through the FOIA,
- Public authorities should be accountable to the public for their actions and decision-making processes.

The factors in favour of not disclosing the information are:

- The Council believes that the public interest arguments in favour of withholding details of its cyber security arrangements to protect it from security breaches is compelling

It is considered that the greater public interest therefore lies in not providing the information at this time. In coming to that conclusion, the public interest in providing the information has been carefully weighed against any prejudice to the public interest that might arise from withholding the information; in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

This response therefore acts as a refusal notice under section 17 of the FOIA.

Please quote the reference number 3396225 in any future communications about this request.

Section 17 (7) (a) of the Freedom of Information Act states that public authorities must provide applicants with details of how they may complain about the handling of their request for information should they wish to. If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been dealt with then you can request an internal review within 40 working days of receiving our response. This should be directed to the Information

Management and Governance Lead, 1st Floor, Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 3NJ or email: info@sefton.gov.uk

Should you choose to request a review of the decision taken and are dissatisfied following the authority's review, you are entitled under Section 17 (7) (b) of the Act to apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision notice. Further information can be found at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Telephone: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.org.uk

I will now close your request as of this date.

Yours sincerely

ICT Support Officer

www.sefton.gov.uk