



**Information Commissioner's Office**  
Promoting public access to official information  
and protecting your personal information

## **Press Release**

### **For immediate release**

Date: 27 June 2008

#### **ICO orders council to release contract with financial details**

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has ordered Mid Suffolk District Council to release a contract with a commercial partner, including the financial details, concerning the work to carry out repairs and maintenance at Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre. The ICO has dismissed the possibility that releasing the contract would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of the council or the contractor.

The council initially provided a redacted version of the contract but told the requester that it was unwilling to release the financial details. The council provided a number of reasons including that disclosure would breach confidentiality, set a precedent and may prevent it from obtaining the best possible price for future work or projects.

In her ruling, Assistant Commissioner, Anne Jones, refused to accept that disclosure would be likely to lead to any change in the tendering process or undermine the council's ability to achieve best value for money. The contract in question dates back to 2004. She also refused to accept the council's suggestion that disclosure would deter organisations from entering into business with public authorities on the basis that council contracts are a lucrative source of business for commercial organisations.

The Assistant Commissioner has criticised Mid Suffolk District Council for taking several months to deal with the complainant's request for an internal review. The

ICO also criticised the council for unacceptable delays in providing additional information and explanations throughout the investigation. The council repeatedly refused to provide material in a timely manner and the ICO has now formally reminded the council of its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act.

Mid Suffolk District Council has 35 days from the date of the decision notice to release the information outlined in the notice.

You can find a copy of the decision notice at the ICO website [here](#).

## **ENDS**

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580.

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Information Commissioner promotes public access to official information and protects personal information. The ICO is an independent body with specific responsibilities set out in the Data Protection Act 1998, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003.
2. This case follows an earlier FOI complaint involving Ryanair and Derry City Council. In that case the ICO ordered the council to release the amount of money paid to the airline to land at Derry airport.
3. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)