



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

**Press Release**  
**For immediate release**

Date: 28 February 2008

**ICO orders 32 local authorities to release information on pension payments**

In a landmark ruling under the Freedom of Information Act, the Information Commissioner has ordered 32 local authorities to disclose the amount of money paid to brokers by investment managers on behalf of employees' pension funds. The Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, has ruled that there is a strong public interest in releasing the information.

In one case, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council received a FOI request for all IMA (Investment Managers Association) disclosure tables. The tables contain a breakdown of the commission payments made by investment managers on behalf of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund. These payments are directly deducted from the pension fund.

The council refused to disclose the information citing two exemptions, confidentiality agreements and commercial sensitivity. However, the Information Commissioner decided that the public interest in disclosing the information overrides the public interest in maintaining the exemptions. The main public interest argument for disclosing the information centres on the need for transparency among public bodies in their decisions when investing public money. The Information Commissioner therefore considers there is a strong public interest in the public being able to scrutinise the council's commission payments.

The Information Commissioner believes that the names of the brokers concerned and the market areas named in some of the tables are exempt from disclosure because their release could prejudice commercial interests.

The full decision notice can be viewed at

[http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/decisionnotices/2008/fs\\_50155391.pdf](http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/decisionnotices/2008/fs_50155391.pdf)

## ENDS

If you need more information, please contact the Information Commissioner's press office on 020 7025 7580 or visit the website at: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

### 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. The GMPF is the staff pension scheme for ten local authorities in Greater Manchester and other related bodies such as schools, colleges and charities
3. Following this decision the ICO has now served 36 decision notices relating to local authorities and disclosure of commission payments, including:
  - Bath and North East Somerset Council
  - Bedfordshire County Council
  - Carmarthenshire County Council
  - Gwynedd Council
  - East Riding of Yorkshire Council
  - Leicestershire County Council
  - Lincolnshire County Council
  - Shropshire County Council
  - Warwickshire County Council
  - Worcestershire County Council
  - East Sussex County Council
  - Kent County Council
  - Cornwall County Council
  - London Borough of Newham
  - London Borough of Sutton
  - Norfolk County Council
  - Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
  - Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
  - Oxfordshire County Council
  - Somerset County Council
  - Suffolk County Council
  - Wiltshire County Council
  - Harrow Council
  - London Borough of Islington
  - London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
  - Hertfordshire County Council
  - London Borough of Redbridge
  - Devon County Council
  - Hampshire County Council
  - London Borough of Lambeth
  - London Borough of Southwark

The following 4 local authorities released the commission payments before being served with the ICO decision notice:

- London Borough of Bexley
- Cheshire County Council
- Surrey County Council
- West Sussex County Council

4. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)
5. Any appeals must be made within 28 days of the date of the Notices