



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

Press Release

For immediate release

Date: 12 January 2007

List of council properties should be made public

The Information Commissioner, Richard Thomas, has ordered Braintree District Council to release the addresses of council properties owned by the authority.

Following a freedom of information request the council refused to release the list of addresses on the grounds that the information constituted personal information and disclosure would breach data protection rules. The council also cited health and safety as a reason for refusing the request.

However, the Information Commissioner ruled that the list of addresses was not exempt from disclosure. Although an address can be personal information, he did not consider that releasing the list would breach the Data Protection Act. The Commissioner was aware that a number of other local authorities, receiving similar requests, had disclosed the information without any problem. He did not accept that the health and safety of Council tenants would be put at risk by publishing the list, although he did agree to the withholding of specific addresses if their disclosure might put particular vulnerable individuals at risk.

The council now has 35 days to release the information to the complainant.

To read the Commissioner's full decision notice on this case, please go to:

http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/decisionnotices/2007/fs_50066606.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

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. For more information about the Information Commissioner's Office subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.ico.gov.uk