

The CPS incorporates RCPO

12 May 2011

Our Ref: 2875 &  
IR/05/11

Mr Tom Watson

Via Email

Dear Mr Watson,

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST -- INTERNAL REVIEW

On 10 March 2011 you submitted a Freedom of Information Act 2000 request in relation to the attendance of Lord Ken Macdonald QC at the Society of Editors Conference in October 2005. This comprised of 10 questions.

On 15 April 2011, you received a response to this request from our Information Management Unit. Answers to 7 of your questions were provided. You were notified, however, that answers to 3 of the questions could not be given as the relevant budget file had been missing. The questions which were not answered were:

- *What was the total cost for Ken Macdonald, former Director of Public Prosecutions, to attend the Society of Editors Conference in 2005?*
- *Please tell me who met the costs of Mr Macdonald's accommodation?*
- *What was the total cost of accommodation for Mr Macdonald's trip?*

On 18 April 2011 you asked for an internal review of the inability to respond to those questions and I have been appointed to conduct that review. I can confirm that I had no involvement in the original response to you. I have now had the opportunity to review the correspondence, speak with those who responded to your request and make further enquiries with our Finance Directorate and Private Office.

You indicated that you thought that it would be likely that an electronic record of payments made relating to Lord Macdonald's attendance at the conference would be available. I have caused enquiries to be made within our Financial Records Management system, called "FARMS". Two payments have been made to Low Wood Hotel, which was the venue for the conference but neither related to Lord Macdonald nor were they during the period of the Society Editors Conference. I have however been able to track down [REDACTED] for travel and subsistence made by Lord Macdonald which covers the period between the 16 October 2005 and 5 November 2005. I can confirm that Lord Macdonald did not make

CPS Headquarters

Rose Court □ 2 Southwark Bridge Road □ London □ SE1 9HS



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any claim for travel or accommodation costs in relation to his attendance at the Conference. The CPS did not therefore incur the cost of his attendance.

In your request for an internal review, you suggested that it was unusual that there was no "handling note" from a press officer relating to the Conference. As already indicated to you, Lord Macdonald was not accompanied on Conference by a press officer or other member of staff. He gave a speech at the Conference but the topic of this was the release of a protocol dealing with the release of prosecution material to the media. The protocol is a public document (and available on the CPS website). It would not require a separate handling note. I would also point out that a handling note would not normally contain details of the costs of attendance at a Conference in any event.

Finally, you ask if a further effort could be made to locate the relevant files. I am satisfied that a reasonable search has been made for the paper file and that it is genuinely mislaid. I do not consider this to be surprising bearing in mind the period of time that has elapsed since the Conference.

In summary, I can confirm that the CPS does not hold the information which would answer your questions as outlined above.

If you are not content with the outcome of this internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours Sincerely,

Sandra Hubblethwaite

**CPS Headquarters**

Rose Court □ 2 Southwark Bridge Road □ London □ SE1 9HS

