The Freedom of Information Act is about to undergo ‘post-legislative scrutiny’, examining how it is working in practice.

"Now that the Act has been in operation for nearly seven years it is right that it is examined to see how well it is operating," said Justice Minister Lord McNally, who announced the review during a recent speech.

The procedure will potentially have a crucial impact on the future development of freedom of information in the UK. Concerns have been raised by FOI campaigners on the one hand and public bodies and private companies on the other, with the former concerned about how FOIA might be reigned in and the latter being nervous about how it might be further extended.

The Information Commissioner’s Office is also concerned. Deputy Information Commissioner Graham Smith said that he was worried that FOI work might suffer disproportionately in an era of public spending cuts, a fear that many FOI officers share.

Lord McNally made it clear that the trade-off between costs and benefits will be one important element in the scrutiny process. He said “the cost of Freedom of Information is something that the government is acutely aware of, especially in the current financial climate. I know that this is an issue of concern across the public sector.

"This is something we will be looking at during post-legislative scrutiny and officials at the Ministry of Justice are working with a broad range of public authorities across the public sector to assess the cost of compliance with the Freedom of Information Act to inform

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