

## Response to Request for Information

Reference      FOI 003482  
Date            17 April 2019

### *Legal spending*

#### **Request:**

Please could you provide me with the expenditures in each of the last five financial years on:

1. Your in-house legal team (if you have one). Please could this be given for each of the past five financial years?
  - 2014-2015 - £1,912,684
  - 2015-2016 - £1,826,357
  - 2016-2017 - £2,068,145
  - 2017-2018 - £2,288,803
  - 2018-2019 - £2,387,885
  
2. Your external legal expenditure to include payments for external legal advisors or arms-length shared legal service team (if appropriate). Again, please could this be broken down for each of the past five financial years?
  - 2014-2015 - £616,528
  - 2015-2016 - £738,164
  - 2016-2017 - £1,084,243
  - 2017-2018 - £1,731,303
  - 2018-2019 - £963,205

Please note that these figures represent the gross revenue and capital spend on external law firms and barristers and do not take into account costs that have been externally funded, by grant for example or recovery from third parties.

3. In relation to the external legal expenditure, please could you provide a breakdown for each of the past five years as to how much was spent per area of council business? For example: planning = £1,000, education = £2,000, HR= £1,000.

Your request for information has now been considered and the City of Wolverhampton Council is not obliged to supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires City of Wolverhampton Council, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states the fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies:

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

**Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit**

We can confirm that the Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request. However, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows a public authority to refuse a request if the cost of providing the information to the applicant would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 18 hours of work). In estimating the cost of complying with a request for information, an authority can only take into account any reasonable costs incurred in:

- (a) *Determining whether it holds the information,*
  - (b) *Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
  - (c) *Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
- and*
- (d) *Extracting the information from a document containing it.*

*For the purposes of the estimate the costs of performing these activities should be estimated at a rate of £25 per hour.*

The information appertaining to your request is not easily accessible and as such this information is not held as a distinct set able to be retrieved or reported on. To get the information would require a full-scale look into all individual payments to understand what kind of payment was made. This would be a manual exercise and as such we believe that the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be 30 hours.