

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 002664
Date 14 August 2018

Consultancy Fees

Request:

For each of the last five full financial years, and to date in the current financial year, please could you provide a breakdown of how much the local authority has spent on consultancy fees?

In respect of your above question, it has been established after careful consideration that the Council does not hold all of the above information as the system we use only started to analyse our spend in the format requested from April 2014.

Consequently, we are unable to provide all of the information relating to the above, and are informing you as required by Section 1(1) (a) of the Act, that states:

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

Please see below information that we can provide for the last 4 full years and the current year to date:

2014	£2,674,890
2015	£2,432,417
2016	£1,611,014
2017	£1,171,691
2018	£ 336,698

For each year, please could you provide a breakdown of which consultancies and consultants received payment and a brief description of what the payment was for?

With reference to your above question, your request 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 records. This would be a manual exercise and as such we believe that the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).

Excess cost removes the City of Wolverhampton Council's obligation under the Freedom of Information, however under Section 16 – (the duty to provide advice and assistance, the Council may be able to provide answers to the request, should you wish to submit a refined request.

Please also find below a link to our contracts register and the data share for spend information which we hope will be of help.

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/6780/Contracts-Register>
<http://data.wolverhampton.gov.uk/>

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]