

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
C O U N C I L

## Response to Request for Information

Reference      FOI 1115144  
Date            25 November 2015

### *Overpayments to Suppliers*

**Request:**

In December 2012 the DCLG published its “50 ways to save” document which included – at No. 4, - recovering accidental duplicate payments made to suppliers. My request concerns the identification and recovery of accidental overpayments and duplicate payments made by the authority.

Q1. When did Wolverhampton City Council last submit data under the National Fraud Initiative’s creditor payments matching exercise (formerly run by the Audit Commission), and what years did the data cover?

Creditor data was last submitted for the National fraud Initiative in October 2014. The data covered the period from April to October 2014.

Q2. What was the value of duplicate and overpayments to creditors identified and recovered as a result of that data matching exercise?

No duplicates or overpayments were identified as a result of the matching exercise.

Q3. Over the last two years, has Wolverhampton City Council engaged third party profit recovery agencies or undertaken any other internal audit for recovering overpayments and duplicate payments made to its suppliers?

We have not engaged third party profit recovery agencies in the last two years for recovering overpayments and duplicate payments made to our suppliers. We have worked with internal audit to analysis our spend, including potential overpayments and duplicate payments. This is a business as usual process rather than a specific audit.

Q4. If the answer to 3 is yes, which years’ data were covered and what was the value of overpayments and duplicate payments identified and recovered? Please specify whether these were internal and/or third party where applicable.

Following careful consideration, the Council regrets to inform you that it has decided not to disclose this information.

Information you have requested has been withheld from disclosure. The exemption engaged is Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI).

Section 12 of the FOI exempts Public Authorities from providing information

where the estimated cost of compliance exceeds the appropriate limit. Any estimate must be undertaken in accordance with the limits set in fees regulations made under Section 12 (5) of the FOI.

These Fees Regulations (SI 2004/3244 Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations) allow for a refusal where the cost of compliance, for local authorities such as the Council, would exceed £450. As a guide, staff time to identify and extract this information is charged at a rate of £25 per hour.

In summary to provide the information you have requested would take us over 18 hours to compile as we have undertaken internal analysis of our spend continuously for many years – potential overpayments and duplicate payments can be identified in many ways and dealt with on a case by case basis.

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”.*