

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 111534
Date 9 November 2015

Freedom of Information, Public Relations and Communications

Request:

For the most recent financial year for which figures are available, the total number of staff working on public relations and communications, and the total salaries paid to those staff. I do not want to request a breakdown of the figures per member of staff. For the period 2014/2015 there were nine people working on public relations and communications with a combined annual salary of £431,062.

For the most recent financial year for which figures are available, the total number of staff working on freedom of information, and the total salaries paid to those staff. I do not want to request a breakdown of the figures per member of staff.

The total estimated cost of responding to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests in 2014/15 was £490,000. This comprises an element of process management and administration and is based on six people working on FOI requests for a percentage of their time. This figure also comprises an assessment of respondent time across the organisation based upon the number of requests received last year (1245) broken down into categories of complexity; but does not include any costs associated with Councillors or Strategic Directors.

The costs recorded are direct employee costs (basic pay and employers national insurance and pension fund contributions). Overhead costs (general running costs of the service) have not been included.

Please note that these are estimated costs and not an exact recording of time spent. Information regarding time spent is held at a granular level within Council systems and therefore in order to provide an accurate figure the Council estimates that work to identify and retrieve relevant information would exceed the statutory cost limit of £450 (18 hours at a rate of 25 per hour) and therefore we believe that section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("The Act") would be engaged.

Section 12 of the Act exempts Public Authorities from providing information where the estimated cost of compliance with the request exceeds the appropriate limit. Any estimate must be made in accordance with the limits set in fees regulations made under Section 12 (5) of the Act.

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

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compliance, for local authorities such as the Council, would exceed £450.