



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 121493
Date 19 January 2015

Communications

Request:

"What is the total communications/ public relations budget for your council? Please provide figures for each of the last six financial years, i.e. 2014/15, 13/14, 12/13, 11/12, 10/11 and 09/10."

2009/10 Not Known (see note below)

2010/11 £0.944 million

2011/12 £0.938 million

2012/13 £0.909 million

2013/14 £0.953 million

2014/15 £0.844 million

2015/16 £0.385 million

With reference to your question regarding information on the year 2009/10, I 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 and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 because to establish the 2009/10 budget would involve significant investigation of the relevant historical individual employee budgets across the council as this pre-dated the centralisation of the Corporate Communications function and therefore to isolate the spend for 2009/10 we would have to manually trawl through the accounts individually to extract the information requested.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 2.5 days 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.

As such I believe that the aggregated time that it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).

*“How many staff are employed in your council's communications department?
Please provide job titles.”*

Currently, there are eight full-time equivalent members of staff.

The job titles are:

Head of Corporate Communication

Communications Advisors

Events and Marketing Officers

Communications Apprentice

“Does your council have a budget for external communications work? If so, please state how much has been spent on this for each of the years above.”

Expenditure on ‘external communications work’ is set out below in terms of the actual spend totals against standard marketing/non recruitment advertising budget codes:

2009/10 £0.812 million

2010/11 £0.582 million

2011/12 £0.536 million

2012/13 £0.700 million

2013/14 £0.625 million

2014/15 £0.297 million (actual spend to date)

“How many investigations has your council conducted into suspected leaks of information to the press in the above period? Please break down the information into the years above and provide details of the suspected leak - when it occurred, how it was investigated, which media outlet did the information 'leaked' appear in, was the investigation successful and what was the outcome for the council employees found to have leaked? Please state whether the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act was used as part of any of these leak investigations - for example, to gather phone records or spy on council employees/journalists - and provide details on how it was used.”

There are no instances in the Council’s disciplinary investigations records which show investigations relating to suspected leaks of information to the press in the periods specified.