

Request:

I would like to know the average proportion of time the elected representatives of your authority spend as part of their duties for 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 on their main activities. The activities that form their duties (employment) as an elected representative are:

directly resolving complaints against the executive (Council Staff) of the Council by residents; 2 sitting on committee's; 3 acting for the political parties that they represent and/or ceremonial duties (i.e. all time not spent on sitting on a Committee or resolving a complaint against the executive);

The total time spent by an elected representative for a Council on these three activities should be 100 per cent of the time they spend 'working for a Council' as an elected representative.

I would additionally like to know how much in total was paid to local councillors to meet all their duties (including expenses) for 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 by your authority, and how many elected representatives are (and were) represented on your authority for these years.

I would also like to know how many Complaints in total were submitted to your Council in 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 for each year. I would further like to know how many of these complaints were formally considered by an elected representative for each of these years.

I would further like to know how many complaints against the Executive (Council staff) led to the elected representatives formally identifying that the Executive had acted wrongly for the years 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, and how many of these formal determinations by the elected representatives identify that there was no wrong-doing by the Executive. How many staff employed by your authority in 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 ceased to be employed by your authority as a direct result of a complaint against the Executive, and the Councillors identifying this to be the case.

I would further like to know how much money the Council has paid to a complainant (i.e. victim of a Council's wrongdoing) through its own complaints system (i.e. excluding any intervention by the Local Government Ombudsman, Valuation Tribunal or similar body) in 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

I would like to know how much money either in the form of local settlement or additional formal finding of maladministration causing injustice the Local Government Ombudsman has recommended that your Council pay in 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 (for each year) and if the Local Government Ombudsman's recommendations have been met in full (including any non-financial recommendations for each year)). Please detail any

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recommendation that has not been met in full and provide a copy of the Elected representatives decision. Please additionally identify if these costs were met directly by Council Tax Payers or the Council's insurers (excluding self insurance by a Council) Finally, please provide details of the financial cost of administering all your complaints systems (including Fol and DP) by the Executive for 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 and the number of staff employed in administering complaints and resolving these (Full time equivalent staffing levels). Please also provide details of your total administrative costs for 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 and the total number of staff employed by your authority, as well as any pay increase (including increments) made to the Council's Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) in pounds sterling for each of these years. Please additionally identify if the Chief Executives wages included performance related payments.

If you do not have this reasonably basic management information related to complaints and/or identify that the costs of accessing the information requested will be more than £450 please state this and identify that your Authority does not have either a functioning or accountable complaints system, and does not maintain any basic management information related to this issue.

If you have a complaints system not fit for purpose please identify which political party currently controls your Council, and if this political party has appointed the current Electoral Registration and Returning Officer through its control of the Council (with date of their formal appointment). Please name the current Electoral Registration and Returning Officer, and identify if they are also Head of Paid Service, and Clerk to your Authority. Please additionally provide any documentation maintained by your Local Authorities Head of Paid Service identifying that they personally do not believe it to be appropriate for your Council to have a complaints system that is fit for purpose. This documentation should be in existence due to the provisions of s4 of the Local Government Act 1989.

Response:

I am writing to inform you that your request for information will not be processed.

This request is refused under s12 (1) Freedom of Information Act 2000, since the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004. In assessing the cost of complying, the costs attributable to officer time involved in complying have been taken into account. Such costs are limited to £450.00, which equates to eighteen hours of officer time.

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this letter acts as a Refusal Notice.

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