

AIR 1669 RESPONSE

- 1) 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:

- 1 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);

This information is not held by the London Borough of Havering

- 2) 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.

Response from Finance & Commerce

Please refer to attachments:
Members allowances 05/06
Members allowances 06/07
Members allowances 07/08

- 3) 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.

Response from Customer Services

Year 2005/06 = 179

Year 2006/07 = 301

Year 2007/08 = 539

- 4) (a) 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.,

Response from Legal & Democratic Services

2005/06 = 11

2006/07 = 9

2007/08 = 4

N.B Only if a complainant remains dissatisfied with the Council's response does it go to a hearing.

(b) 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.

- 5) 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.

Response from Customer Services

Nil

- 6) 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 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)

Response from Legal & Democratic Services

Costs would be met by Council resources.

In 2005/06 a total of £725 was paid as part of the local settlement of cases

In 2006/07 a total of £29,800 was paid

In 2007/08 a total of £11,370 was paid

All Local Government Ombudsmen recommendations implemented.

- 7) Finally, please provide details of the financial cost of administering all your complaints systems (including FoI 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.

Response from Legal & Democratic Services

Complaints Handling – Democratic Services, although not a front line service, is involved as part of its normal day to day activity in dealing with complaints in a number of ways – staff of the Service deal with:

- a) The Local Government Ombudsman, as a contact point for all LGO enquiries on behalf of the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer.
- b) Hearing Panels for those complaints that have not been resolved by staff.
- c) Initial enquiries by members of the public who wish to pursue complaints and are not sure to whom to turn.
- d) Enquiries by Members on behalf of constituents.

In addition, there are from time to time complaints arising from other activities of the service that are dealt with by staff as part of the Council's Complaints procedure.

The service does not account for its staff time on an activity-by-activity basis and so these various activities, as part of the Service's mainstream activities, are not accounted for separately.

It is however estimated that overall, staff in the Service's management and in Committee and Overview & Scrutiny Support (15 staff) collectively spend approximately 7.5% of their time on complaint related activity. This amounts to a cost (including accommodation and other 'on costs') in 2008/09 of about £50,000.

Staff in Member and Cabinet Support (10 staff) provide direct support to Councillors in dealing with constituents' enquiries, which will include complaints, but no division of their time is recorded.

Response from Finance & Commerce

Total payroll costs for 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 are attached

Total staff in the authority:

05-06 – 7,446

06/07 – 7,508

07/08 – 7,114

Pay increases to CE:

The council does not have a performance related pay scheme for chief officers. Salary increases are based on the agreements reached by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Chief Officers. These are:

2005/06 - 2.95%

2006/07 - 2.95%

2007/08 - 2.475%

The current Chief executive was appointed in March 2007 on a salary of £160,000.

Response from Customer Services

Customer Relations (Corporate Complaints) = 1 Dedicated member of staff and another that assists in addition to her regular duties = 1.17 FTE at a cost of;

05/06 £37,190

06/07 £41,440

07/08 £44,130

There are no other dedicated staff who deal with complaints within Customer Services and no information held on time spent for staff who deal with complaints in addition to their main roles.

- 8) 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.

N/A

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.

N/A