



Freedom of Information Act 2000

Information Request FOI/2008/428

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:

- directly resolving complaints against the executive (Council Staff) of the Council by residents;
- sitting on committee's;
- 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.

Mendip District Council does not keep a record of the time spent by elected members in carrying out their duties for the Council.

This Council does not feel that your assertion that the three points above accurately reflect the role of a District Councillor is correct and would draw your attention to the relevant section from the Council's Constitution which is attached for your reference and can be accessed via the link below:

<http://www.mendip.gov.uk/Documents/CorporateSupport/Constitution%20Section%2003%20Members%20of%20the%20Council.pdf>

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.

The Number of elected members for each of the years was as follows:

2005/2006	46
2006/2007	46
2007/2008	47 (An additional representative was required following the Boundary Committee Review in 2006)

Members' Allowances - Please find attached the Public Notices placed in the local press for each of the years above.

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.

The number of complaints logged by the Council for each of the three years is as follows:

2005/2006	16
2006/2007	61
2007/2008	120

The number of complaints considered by a Complaints Panel of Elected Members

2005/2006	5
2006/2007	6
2007/2008	6

4. 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.

Year	Number of Complaints Panel Hearings and outcomes	Members of staff dismissed	Financial compensation offered
2005/2006	<p>5 Complaints Panel Hearings</p> <p>1 Upheld 2 partially upheld 2 not upheld</p> <p>In all cases processes and procedures to be improved</p>	None	£2750 in total offered
2006/2007	<p>6 Complaints Panel Hearings</p> <p>2 Partially upheld 4 not upheld</p> <p>In most cases processes and procedures to be improved</p>	None	£350 in total offered

2007/2008	6 Complaints Panel Hearings 1 Upheld 3 partially upheld 2 not upheld In some cases processes and procedures to be improved	None	£500 in total offered
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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.

Please see response to paragraph 4 above

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).

The number of complaints the Ombudsman received is as follows:

2005/2006 24

2006/2007 25

2007/2008 17

In this year, five complaints were settled locally and £2,825 was paid in compensation.

All costs were met from the general fund and, therefore, met indirectly by the Council Tax payers.

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.

The number of staff employed by the Council is as follows:

2005/2006 207

2006/2007 216

2007/2008 227

Total administrative costs for the Council can be obtained from the Statements of Accounts which are available on the Council's website. The links are below for your convenience:

2005/2006

http://www.mendip.gov.uk/Documents/Statement_of_Accounts_2005_06.pdf

2006/2007

<http://www.mendip.gov.uk/Documents/Web/Statement%20of%20Accounts%202006-07%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf>

2007/2008

<http://www.mendip.gov.uk/Documents/CorporateSupport/Statement%20of%20Accounts%202007-08%20COUNCIL%20APPROVED%20%282%29.pdf>

Information relating to the costs of administering the Council's complaints system is not held. There are no dedicated officers dealing with the administration of the Council's complaints system.

The Chief Executive received the same increments as all other members of staff for the three years requested above. The salary increases were as per the nationally negotiated agreements. The Chief Executive does not receive any performance related pay.

We consider that the amount of the Chief Executive's salary is exempt under Section 40 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it is personal data. However, the salary bands for the three years are as follows:

2005/2006	£74,268 to £90,180
2006/2007	£74,464 to £92,880
2007/2008	£78,356 to £95,179

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.

Not applicable – no response required

9. 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 **[and Housing ?]** Act 1989.

Not applicable – no response required

I would draw your attention to the copyright statement on the reverse of this Response.

Fiona Lyons

Data Protection Officer

Date: 22 September 2008

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