



Stuart Hardwicke Carruthers

Via Email

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Legal & Democratic Services

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17 October 2008

Dear Stuart Hardwicke Carruthers

Re: Your request for information: Ref No. FOI 3088

Thank you for your request for information that was received on 26 August 2008 in which you requested:

“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);

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 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 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.

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.”

In response to questions 1 and 2 the Council does not collect or hold information on the proportion of time members spend on these activities.

Members of the Executive in carrying out their duties spend 100% of their time on Council business. Each member of the Executive has their own area of responsibility e.g. Children’s Services and Education, Citizenship, Equalities & Communities, Community Safety, Culture, Leisure & Sports, Environment, Housing Management, Health & Adult Care, Regeneration and Resources. Their responsibility covers committee attendance, ceremonial duties and associated duties pertinent to their roles.

Information pertaining to members’ salaries and expenses are in the public domain and details are published annually in the local press covering Southwark, namely the South London Press. Details for the years 2005/06, 2006/07 are held on the Southwark website. Publication of the 2007/08 figures will be available from 17 October 2008 these will also be published on the website. The information held also records the number of members for the requisite years requested.

The total number of complaints submitted for the years 2005/2006, 2006/207 and 2007/2008 are as follows:

| | |
|-------------|------|
| 2005 - 2006 | 6732 |
| 2006 - 2007 | 7481 |
| 2007 - 2008 | 8450 |

In 2005/6 13 complaints were considered by elected members as they resulted in Ombudsman Reports.

No staff have been dismissed and/or ceased to be employed as a direct result of a complaint against the Executive.

Compensation payments were as follows:

| Total Compensation paid at Stages 1/2/3 | | Total Compensation recommended By the LGO |
|---|-------------|---|
| 2005/2006 | £80,743.61 | £32,093 |
| 2006/2007 | £100,536.39 | £64,265.43 |
| 2007/2008 | £146,297.63 | £52,802.55 |

The Council complies with all Ombudsman recommendations.

Details relating to the financial costs of administering our complaints system, the number of staff employed and the total expenditure for administrative costs – this information is not held in the format requested. There has been an allocation of Central Administrative Expenses over all services, based on Service Level Agreements. - see paragraph 2.11 on page 16 of the 2007/08 accounts. Back copies from 1999/2000 are available on the

Council's website at:

<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCouncil/keydocuments/statementofaccounts.html>

Pay increases (including increments) made to the Council's Chief Executive for the years 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08. All staff were awarded the following percentage increases for the years requested:

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 |
| 2.95% | 2.95% | 2.475% |

Generally, however, the following information is in the public domain; Chief Executive salary scale is £140,025 to £160,224 per annum. Progression through the scale is by annual increments, subject to satisfactory performance.

Performance related pay up to 20% of base salary, based on annual assessment against performance targets.

Details pertaining to Southwark's complaints procedure can be found at:

<http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCouncil/ContactSection/complaintscomplimentscomments.html>

This information is being provided as a statutory obligation under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please note that under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 Southwark Council ask not to receive unsolicited marketing communications.

You are free to use the information provided for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, requires the permission of the copyright holder. You may apply for permission to re-use this information by submitting a request to accessinfo@xxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx; you can find details on these arrangements at <http://www.southwark.gov.uk/YourCouncil/Copyright>. Detailed advice about the Reuse of Public Sector Information Regulations (PSI) 2005 is available from the Office of Public Sector Information at: <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/advice/index.htm>.

If you have any queries or concerns then please contact us using the above details.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make an appeal for a review of our decision, you should write to the Corporate Access to Information Manager at:

Corporate Access to Information Manager
Room 3.12
Town Hall
Peckham Road
London SE5 8UB
Email: accessinfo@southwark.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome your appeal, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted our internal appeal procedure and you should contact him within 2 months of the outcome of your internal appeal. Further information on the Freedom of Information Act is available through the Information Commissioner at the:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane

Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 700
Internet: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Janet McDonald
Corporate Access to Information Officer
Legal & Democratic Services