

My Ref: IGO/11-8261
Your Ref:
Contact: Andrew Goodfellow
Email: information.governance@nottinghamcity.gov.uk



Nottingham
City Council

Information Governance

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Mr. B. Rodgers

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

4th May 2011

Dear Mr. Rodgers

Re: Your request for information

Thank you for your email dated 11th February 2011. Your request has been processed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Initially, I would like to take this opportunity to apologise for the delay in responding to your request.

Owing to the fact that this authority is applying an exemption to part of the information requested, please accept this letter as a refusal notice issued in accordance with section 17 of this Act.

I have investigated your request and the answers to your questions are as follows.

- 1. Please provide details of which senior officer posts and councillors currently have mobile phones that are supplied by the authority and or expenses which may be given for use of personal phones for business use.*

Please note that we have taken 'senior officer posts' to mean posts at Tier 3 and above.

Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Corporate Director of Resources
Corporate Director Children & Families
Corporate Director for Communities
Corporate Director of Development
Director – Partnerships
Director – Communications
Director – One Nottingham
Director – Schools & Learning
Director – Family Community Teams
Director – Safeguarding



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Director – Quality & Commissioning
Director – Adult Assessment
Director – Adult Provision & Health Information
Director – Neighbourhood Services
Director – Sports, Culture & Parks
Director – Neighbourhoods & Communities
Director – Community Protection
Director – Workplace Strategy & Property
Director – NET
Director – Major Programmes
Director – Economic Innovation & Employment
Director – Information & Technology
Director – HR & Organisational Transformation
Director – Strategic Finance
Director – Legal & Democratic Services
Councillor Ahmed
Councillor Arnold*
Councillor Bryan
Councillor Bull*
Councillor Campbell
Councillor Chapman
Councillor Clark
Councillor Dewinton
Councillor Grocock
Councillor Hartshorne*
Councillor Johnson*
Councillor Jones*
Councillor Klein
Councillor Lee*
Councillor Liversidge*
Councillor MacLennan
Councillor Malcolm
Councillor Marshall
Councillor Mellen
Councillor Newton*
Councillor Packer
Councillor Smith
Councillor Trimble
Councillor Unczur
Councillor Urquhart
Councillor Watson*
Councillor Wildgust
Councillor Williams
Councillor Wood

2. Please also provide the phone numbers associated with each

With regards the mobile telephone numbers of councillors, a number of these (marked with an asterisk above) are exempt from release under the information you requested is exempt from disclosure under section 21 of this act as they are already available from our website:

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=397>

With regards all other numbers for councillors and Nottingham City Council employees, the information you requested was suggested for exemption under section 36 of this Act and forwarded to the qualified person for evaluation. This person assessed whether the release of this information could be capable of prejudicing or inhibiting the effective conduct of public affairs. The outcome of his consideration was as follows.

1. We are aware that the City Council has a Services Directory, which is available in various media, and provides quite comprehensive coverage of Council services with direct access availability for citizens to nominated points of contact, whether personally identified or not. Some of these contacts may be to mobile devices, amongst other means of contact, but this will be at the option of the Council in developing its organisational response to citizen access requirements.
2. Mobile telephones are used extensively by senior officers and councillors but are not seen as a primary telephone access medium for citizens. They are extremely useful in enabling immediate communication between known existing contacts. Many senior officers, and all councillors, have administrative/secretarial/group worker support arrangements which are intended to enable more efficient working involving effective time management and prioritisation, and, where applicable (such as with the councillors' "casework" system), the logging of enquiries into some form of work management system. Such arrangements, linked to the Services Directory access channels, enable enquiries to be dealt with at the most appropriate level.
3. In the view of the qualified person, if access to senior officer/councillor mobile telephone numbers is made generally available to citizens, this increased availability is likely to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs by unnecessarily disrupting the effectiveness and efficiency of senior officers and councillors through the, likely, bypassing, by direct callers, of established channels of communication, with the likely following practical effects:-
 - (a) the taking of calls by senior officers and councillors in relation to issues which do not relate to functions within their remit, requiring the expenditure of time (which is a diversion from "core" work) in redirecting the caller to an appropriate responder;
 - (b) the wastage of time of senior officers and councillors in redirecting callers where they have called on a matter which is within the overall remit of that senior officer or councillor but which is a matter which should have been dealt with by a less senior officer who would have the expertise and support systems to deal with it;
 - (c) direct callers may create a false prioritisation for their matter by virtue of the direct contact enabling them to continue to push the priority of their case, notwithstanding the fact that other cases may deserve a higher priority;
 - (d) currently, the availability of mobile telephones has led to many senior officers allowing themselves to be available for

contact outside normal working hours. This is, mainly, the exercise of goodwill by such employees and is outside any formal "on-call" arrangements. If officers were to be subject to serial contact by citizens outside their normal working hours they would be far less likely to allow contact by mobile telephone during non-working hours.

4. My conclusion, therefore, is that the Section 36 exemption is engaged on the basis that the release of the information would, or would be likely otherwise, to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.
5. Following on from this the qualified person considered whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure of the information. There is a clear public interest in the City Council having transparent systems for citizens' access. We are, however, satisfied that the current access systems and contact information provided by the Council fulfil these requirements, including systems for receiving contacts and allocating them to the most appropriate person to deal with them. We do not consider that adding general mobile telephone contact details for senior officers and councillors, where they are not already available, will enhance the current access arrangements but have concerns, set out at 3(a) to (d) above, that such availability may disrupt working practices and be detrimental to effectiveness and efficiency. Accordingly, we have concluded that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

3. *Expenditure for each for the last 3 financial years, i.e. 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 so far.*

2008/09 £4,646.56
2009/10 £6,198.06
2010/11 £2,381.64

4. *Could you please specifically highlight any senior posts or councillors which do not have phones provided by the authority and/or receive expenses for business calls made on personal phones.*

With regards to councillors' allowances the information you requested is exempt from disclosure under section 21 of this act as they are already available from our website:

<http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=397>

With regards to employees, where officers do not hold a City Council provided mobile phone, they are able to seek reimbursement of calls made in respect of work related activities, subject to the officers providing evidence to support the claim such as an invoice showing details of the call (date, time, cost etc). In order to identify the details of the expenses claimed would require an analysis of the ledgers. It is estimated that retrieving this information from the ledgers for recent years would take a further 12 hours in addition to the officer time

already expended addressing the other questions in this request and that this would exceed the 2.5 day limit.

Section 13 of this act permits authorities to charge a fee for any requests which would exceed the appropriate limit for Local Authority's of £450, which is equivalent to requests that would require more than 2.5 days' continuous work to provide a response. To undertake this work we would first require the payment of a fee in excess of £450.00

Therefore, in accordance with Section 12 of this Act we are exempting this information as the cost to the Authority of complying with your request would exceed the appropriate limit.

5. I also request NCC policy for mobile phone usage, or if this is publicly available could you include a web link.

Please see the attached document entitled;

"11-8261 Business Mobile Phone Policy.pdf"

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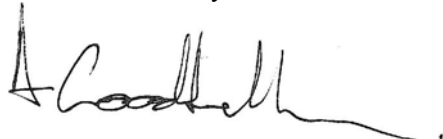
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If you should have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me on the above number quoting your personal case reference which is **IGO/11-8261**.

If you are not satisfied with the response provided or any exemptions applied you should write in the first instance to **Stephanie Pearson, Information Governance, 1st Floor, Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG** stating the reasons for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied after receiving a response to your initial complaint you can request an independent review from the Information Commissioner's Office at **FOI/EIR Complaints Resolution, Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF**. You may also contact the Information Commissioner's Office by telephone on 01625 545745 or by email at mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Coakley', written over a horizontal line.

Senior Information Governance Officer