



South Tyneside Council

Johan Briggs
request-189154-0996b3d8@whatdotheyknow.com

Date: 20th January 2014
Our Ref: FOI 13 13310

Dear Mr Briggs

Freedom of Information Request

I refer to your Freedom of Information Request received on 13th December 2013.

Your request asked for the following information:

Your Request

- 1) Please provide any documents which set out how the decision was reached to extend the Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Authority joint legal panel for an extra year. This should include any submissions made to councillors and arguments for / against extending the panel.
- 2) When and where does the Council expect to advertise the opportunity to be part of the next Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Authority joint legal panel?
- 3) Please provide copies of any emails sent by Council staff to staff at current panel law firms relating to the letting of the next Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Authority joint legal panel.
- 4) Please provide a copy of the last email sent to all staff in the legal services department reminding them of their obligations to declare all gifts and hospitality received from law firms.
- 5) Please provide a list of all gifts and hospitality received by council staff from members of the panel (broken down by firm) since 1.1.2012.

Council's Response

We can confirm the following information with regards your request above.

- 1) Please provide any documents which set out how the decision was reached to extend the Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Authority joint legal panel for an extra year. This should include any submissions made to councillors and arguments for / against extending the panel.

This information is not held as no such documents are in existence. The option to extend the framework agreement was contained in the original approval and as such no such report to members was required. The extension was effected on the basis of the existing contract terms following discussions between Partner Authorities.

2) When and where does the Council expect to advertise the opportunity to be part of the next Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Authority joint legal panel?

This information is not held.

3) Please provide copies of any emails sent by Council staff to staff at current panel law firms relating to the letting of the next Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Authority joint legal panel.

This information is not held as no such emails have been sent.

4) Please provide a copy of the last email sent to all staff in the legal services department reminding them of their obligations to declare all gifts and hospitality received from law firms.

This information is not held as no such e-mails have been sent. The Council's policy as to gifts and hospitality is set out in the Code of Conduct for Employees.

5) Please provide a list of all gifts and hospitality received by council staff from members of the panel (broken down by firm) since 1.1.2012.

No gifts or hospitality were received.

Advice and Assistance

Although South Tyneside Council do not hold the information you have requested, the Council has a duty under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act to provide advice and assistance where appropriate. In this context we understand Newcastle City Council are the lead authority for the legal framework, so you may wish to contact the Freedom of Information service at Newcastle City Council with your request.

Copyright Procedure

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use this information for your own purposes, including any non-commercial research you are doing and news reporting. Any other re-use of this information, for example commercial publication requires the permission of the Council as the Copyright holder. All re-use requests will be treated under the Re-Use of Public Information Regulation 2006.

Internal Review Procedure

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of this enquiry you can invoke the Council's internal review procedures to ask for an independent review of your request. All such requests must be sent to us within 4 weeks and must clearly state in writing your reference number and your reasons for your request for internal review.

The Information Governance Team can be contacted at the following address: Information Governance Team, Central Library, Prince Georg Square, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 2PE.

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Should you remain dissatisfied with the final outcome of the internal review process you can write to the Information Commissioner to ask for an independent review. The Information Commissioner is the Government's Independent Body responsible for overseeing the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Please do note the ICO will only review cases that have exhausted the Council's internal review procedures. All correspondence to the ICO must quote the Council's reference number and your reasons for your appeal.

The ICO's contact details are as follows: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF. More information can be found on the ICO's website at www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk.

If you have any further queries about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us on (0191) 424 6539, or by emailing foi@southtyneside.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

Paul Robinson
Corporate Lead, Corporate Affairs