**Housing**

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Ask For: Freedom of Information Team

Email: FOI@ashford.gov.uk

Our Ref: FOI-8945

Date: 3 April 2020

Dear Rich Pemberton

Thank you for your emails of 30 March 2020 and additional email of the 01 April 2020 requesting information about the sewage treatment works at Chapmans Close, Challock.

From our preliminary assessment, it is clear that we will not be able to answer your requests without further clarification. Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for local authorities is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending 2.5 working days in determining whether the Council holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

We estimate that it will take us in excess of 2.5 working days to determine appropriate material and locate, retrieve and extract the information in reference to your requests. Therefore, your requests will not be processed further in their current form.

When estimating whether the appropriate limit is likely to be exceeded under the act we are permitted to aggregate requests made by one person, requesting information of a similar nature, in this case all associated to the sewage treatment works at Chapmans Close, made across a reasonable period normally within 60 working days.

Reading your requests and talking to the relevant officers within the service it is my understanding that it is the period of time over which you are requesting the data that will push the threshold beyond the limit. Your requests, in places, will require the searching of records returning to the 1970s, it is not clear if these records are any longer retained and to conduct appropriate searches will require the searching of both electronic and physical records that will take a considerable amount of time to conduct.

You may wish to refine your request by significantly narrowing its scope, including any dates or period of time relevant to the information required. It is understood that information concerning the sewage treatment works and associated maintenance and costs is increasingly readily available the closer the time period get until the present. For example your requests reduced in scope to the last 3 years is likely to be accepted.

Kind regards

Freedom of Information Team

If you believe the Council has not complied with the Freedom of Information Act in relation to your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests must be submitted no later than 40 working days after the date on which you believe that the Council failed to comply with the legislation and must be addressed to: Freedom of Information Manager, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL or email foi@ashford.gov.uk. The Council's procedure for internal reviews can be viewed at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/freedom-of-information>. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, SK9 5AF; www.ico.org.uk; Tel. 0303 123 1113.