

Our reference: 7206 FOI

02 October 2014

Dear Mr Halinson,

Thank you for your request of 02 September 2014 in which you asked for the following information. Please find our response to your questions below in blue:

1. The amount of bus subsidies provided to bus operators on the following routes in Oxford.

- a. Route 400

This bus route is provided on a commercial basis and no subsidy is paid.

- b. Route 800

This bus route is part of a joint contract for the provision of routes 700, 800 and 900 paid for by a central Government grant under the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) scheme. The total allocated for revenue support for these services was £600,000 to be paid over an eighteen month period from September 2013 with the contracted service level to be maintained until September 2016. A further £600,000 was also part of the grant to be used for the purchase of new vehicles.

- c. Route 8

This bus route is provided on a commercial basis and no subsidy is paid.

- d. Route 9

This bus route is provided on a commercial basis and no subsidy is paid.

2. The estimated passengers per route and an estimate/calculation of future subsidies for these routes.

Oxfordshire County Council does hold the information regarding passenger numbers, unfortunately the Council is unable to release this information to you by virtue of the exception found in Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act which states that:- Commercial detriment of third parties.

Public interest test

In reaching the decision to use Section 43(2), the Council considers whether the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosure. In reaching its conclusion the Council considered the following factors in favour of and against disclosure.

Factors in favour of disclosure

The Council recognises that a public authority should apply a presumption in favour of disclosure when considering a request for information. The Council does hold the patronage figures being requested.

Factors against disclosure

The operators of these services (Oxford Bus and Stagecoach) have been contacted and they have stated that the patronage figures are commercially confidential and should not be released to a third party.

Releasing this information could negatively affect the legitimate economic interests of the operator and give an advantage to any potential competitor.

There is the likelihood of commercial damage being caused to the operators. This would impact on the ability of bus operators to deliver economic public services in Oxfordshire and could lead to a reduction in services and increased prices.

These bus services are not subsidised by the Council and therefore the County Council does not have a right to this information. The information is sent to the Council in good faith on a confidential basis to assist it with its overall understanding and management of transport in Oxfordshire. Release of this information would mean that bus companies would not realise this information in the future which would negatively impact on the Councils ability to manage transport in the future.

Given the factors under consideration, the Council considers that the public interest lies in withholding the information requested in Question 2.

However, to advise and assist, as services 8, 9 and 400 are commercially operated Oxfordshire County Council cannot supply any passenger numbers as these are commercially sensitive. Passenger numbers for service 800 totalled 3,776 for the four week period 17 February to 14 March 2014.

Internal review

If you are dissatisfied with the service or response to your request you can ask for an internal review as follows:

- Contact the Complaints & Freedom of Information team in Law & Governance :
foi@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Use the online complaints form on our website:
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/complaints
- Write to the Complaints & Freedom of Information team at the FREEPOST address:

Complaints and Comments
Oxfordshire County Council
FREEPOST (SCE 7709)
Oxford OX1 1YA.

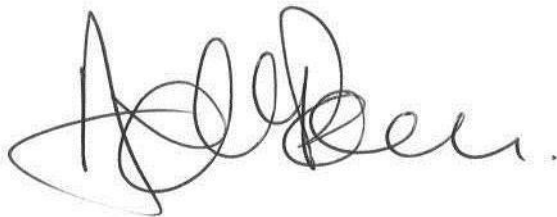
If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane,
Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Telephone: 0303 123 1113 Website: www.ico.gov.uk

Please let me know if you have further enquiries. I would be grateful if you could use the reference number given at the top of this email.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Pau', with a large, stylized initial 'A'.

Andrew Pau
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www.oxfordshire.gov.uk