

Mr Gavin Chait
WHAT DO THEY KNOW?

PAUL JOHNSON
DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES &
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Resources Directorate
Corporate Performance, Policy and Information
Council House
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Our Ref: 1387596

Please ask for: Carol Donovan
Date: 18 April 2016

Dear Mr Chait

Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA)

This request has been handled under the above legislation, please accept our apologies for the slight delay and find our response below. You asked:

Could you please provide me with a complete and up-to-date list of all business (non-residential) property rates data for your local authority, and including the following fields:

- *Billing Authority Code*
- *Firm's Trading Name (i.e. property occupant)*
- *Full Property Address (Number, Street, Postal Code, Town)*
- *Occupied / Vacant*
- *Date of Occupation / Vacancy*
- *Actual annual rates charged (in Pounds)*

I am aware that you already do provide listings of some business rates data (such as credit balances, or those receiving rates relief) but the existing data does not state whether properties are occupied or vacant (whether relief is received or not). It is also critical that the Billing Authority Code be provided for each property otherwise I am unable to reconcile your data with the Valuations Office master list.

Under Section 21 FoIA we are not required to provide information in response to a request, if it is already reasonably accessible to you. The majority of the information (including the Billing Authority code [or property reference number]) is published quarterly and is already available on our website using the following link:

<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/About-the-Council/Statistics-data/openddataandpublicationscheme/whatwespandandhowwespandit/NNDRdata>

We would recommend bookmarking this link, as it will be used to publish future data sets. We have been advised that the latest data (up to 31st March 2016) will be published within the next seven days.

However, in respect of the actual annual rates charged, the information is not held in a format that can be reported on, as you required. The service area has advised that to identify, locate and extract the information, this would involve manual interrogation of approximately 3968 accounts and estimate that this would take (on average) two minutes per account or 132 hours, at a cost of £3300 (based upon an hourly rate of £25).

Under Section 12(1) FoIA, if the cost exceeds the 'appropriate limit' then the public authority can refuse to fulfill the request: for Local Authorities this limit set at £450 (which equates to 18 hours). Therefore, this response acts as a refusal notice under Section 17 FoIA.

We trust this information is of assistance. However, if you wish to request a review of our decision or make a complaint about how your request has been handled you should write to the following address or reply to the email to which this letter is attached:

Corporate Information Governance Manager
Resources Directorate
Corporate Performance, Policy and Information
Council House, Manor Square
Solihull, West Midlands
B91 3QB

Your request for an internal review should be submitted to us within 40 days of receipt by you of this response. Any requests received after this time will be considered at the discretion of the Corporate Information Governance Manager.

If having exhausted the review process you are not content that your request or review has been dealt with correctly, you have a further right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO will not make a decision until you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the council. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Telephone: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 (national rate). Website: www.ico.gov.uk.

We will now close your request as of this date.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Donovan
Corporate Information Governance Officer
Corporate Performance, Policy and Information

