

Information Governance
People, Policy and Performance

Ms Samantha Goodman
[request-614790-b8ed89b5@whatdotheyknow.com](#)

Our ref: FOI/ E33717

Ask for: Information Governance

Date: 17.12.2019

Tel: 020 8430 2000

Email:

information.governance@newham.gov.uk

Dear Ms Goodman,

Request for Review: Freedom of Information Act 2000
Please quote our reference: E33717
Subject: Business Rate Accounts

I write following your request for an Internal Review of the Council's response following your recent enquiry for information held by the Council under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Original Request

I would like to request a spreadsheet or text file which contains information about National Non Domestic Rates, commonly referred to as Business Rates in Newham Borough.

Specifically, the list I seek is only for the properties for which the account holder is Newham Borough Council. Not for any other account holders.

I am looking for as much information as you hold about these specific non domestic properties in Newham Borough and the information you store about them related to business rates they pay.

I would like as much of this NNDR information as you hold and are able to disclose, including the following if possible:

- address of the property in question
- property description / type of property
- rateable value
- actual charge
- charitable reliefs
- discretionary reliefs
- empty exemptions

- empty reliefs
- mandatory reliefs
- Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR) -including dates when exemptions/reliefs started

Your reason for requesting an Internal Review on 1st March 2017

This reply does not make sense considering the reply I received for my last FOI in which the council suggested I narrowed down my request. This is a standard reply which does not deal with my very specific request which is only asking for a limited amount of records specifically about the Council, which could be obtained with a simple search.

Findings

I have reviewed the response sent to you under reference E33717 and the reasons previously extended to you as to why our systems could not supply this information, together with the further information held by the Council concerning this subject.

From previous similar enquiries relating to the data of live Business rates accounts, our systems have not had the capability of extrapolating the complete data requested and we have therefore always been forced to exempt such requests under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act. Previously this would have required manually reviewing individual accounts to fully compile the complete data from various but limited reporting capabilities of our system, which we were unable to previously reconcile. For such requests we would usually exempt the standard response which you received.

Unfortunately upon initial reading the officer logging the new request had assumed, particularly with the listing of the headings, that your request was for general data and thus is was allocated for receiving our standard response. Upon review, it is evident that your original request expressly states *"specifically, the list I seek is only for the properties for which the account holder is Newham Borough Council. Not for any other account holders."* Unfortunately this was not picked up on first reading by the officer and the specific nature of your request was overlooked. For this we must apologise as this was clearly an error in the logging process and should have subsequently been picked up prior to you receiving the standard response.

We are pleased to inform you that following improvements to the reporting facilities of our Business Rates computerised systems, we are now able to compile basic raw data of open accounts and these are now made publicly available on the Newham website.

For your reference, please see the relevant web link below;

https://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/Services/Freedom-of-Information.aspx?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=footer&utm_campaign=foi#NNDRNationalNonDomesticRatesnbspFreedomofinformationrequests

This information is available in searchable excel format on the website and the data is due to be updated quarterly.

Therefore the requested information in respect of Newham being the relevant account holder is now publicly available and through sorting and filtering the data on the spreadsheet, you will be able to independently compile the information required. Due to the delay you have already experienced due to our administrative error at the point of logging, we have sorted and filtered the data for you and this is attached to our response.

Should you require this information in the future for forthcoming updated quarterly produced raw data, accounts would usually be recorded under 'LBN' (London Borough of Newham.)

Having given your appeal careful consideration, I uphold your appeal in that you did not receive the correct response due to an administrative error at the point of logging, for which we must apologise. We have addressed this matter with the individual officer responsible and instilled in the team the need to carefully read all requests in their entirety in order to determine as to how to source the relevant information or whether it may already be publicly available.

I trust this additional information now completes your request in full and to your satisfaction. If you remain dissatisfied with this response you are afforded the option of contacting the Information Commissioner's Office at:

<https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public>

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of Information Governance

Newham Council