



South Tyneside Council

Iain Logan
request-233601-48cbc329@whatdotheyknow.com

Date: 6th November 2014
Our Ref: FOI 14 14494

Dear Mr Logan

Freedom of Information Request

I refer to your Freedom of Information Request received on 10th October 2014.

Your Request

Would you please provide me with details of total spending for repairs and maintenance with contractors for the following since February 2012 to-date?

- Roofing works
- Plastering works
- Joinery works
- Scaffolding works
- Door canopies
- UPVC Gutters / rainwater goods

Please provide the same details separately for the above in connection with Decent Homes works covering the same dates as above?

Each of the above should list the individual contractor and service which they provided and the total value paid to each contractor from February 2012 to date, listing total payment to each named contractor for Repairs and Maintenance and separately for Decent Homes works.

Council's Response

The Council does hold the information that falls within the description of your request; however we have decided to refuse your request under the section 12 exemption of the Act as it would exceed the appropriate cost threshold of the Act.

The Council are not legally obliged to respond to requests for information which exceed the cost threshold of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). The appropriate limit as set out in Section 12 of the Act is £450. This cost presents one person spending 2½ working days (i.e. 18 hours) in determining if the information is held and locating, retrieving and extracting the information for disclosure purposes.

We estimate that to respond to your FOI request would involve substantial effort and a disproportionate exercise of trawling through manual and electronic records, thus exceeding the £450 limit. It is on this basis that your request is refused.

Reason for refusal – and time estimate analysis

When the Council does hold the information requested, but has decided to withhold providing information on the grounds of excessive time or cost, I have a duty to explain the efforts made by the Council to provide you with the information and explain the process and steps taken to make this decision.

To respond accurately to your request would require retrieving the records of each individual repair / renewal request, then by section and order placed. As an example to try to fulfil your request, we initiated a search of records received via The South Tyneside Homes Responsive Repairs team only, and there were 3889 repair requests received for Sub Contracting works in the 2013/14 year, so if pro rata'd over the period requested would equate to approximately 9722 requests excluding separately placed Oracle payment system orders by this team. We would then have to analyse each record on an individual basis.

We also have those raised via ST Homes Client teams, Planned Team (Including planned and one off replacement orders), and also the Asset team. It is difficult to accurately predict a labour timescale to locate and retrieve this data. However for repairs alone, we have estimated this would take a minimum of 4 days of one officer's time, assuming it took one minute checking each record of transaction.

Additionally, the Asset team have confirmed the length of time taken for plastering and joinery would require Quantity Surveyors to go through each individual stream of works to check costs and for the period requested would take a number of weeks not days.

The information requested does not sit under a specific budget line that would allow easy data extraction in the format you have requested. For example, our systems are not set up in a format or budget specifically called 'Plastering' where all plastering works would be placed, costed and recorded. South Tyneside Homes has 120,000 job tickets per year alone for repairs which could contain some aspect of plastering along with other works completed. Plastering is then also carried out on Void jobs (which could be around 7,000 job tickets per annum), Decent homes works, after one off rewires and heating installations, after one off kitchen installations and after structural and flooring works.

The same challenges would apply for Roofing and joinery works, which would all require a similar process.

It is on this basis that I am satisfied that every effort has been made to try to provide the information you have requested within the allowable timescales, but I conclude a Section 12 exemption has been correctly applied to your request.

Advice and assistance

Under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act we are obliged to provide advice and assistance, where appropriate when refusing information held on cost grounds.

We therefore envisage that should you narrow the scope of your request to fall within the limit of the Act we may be able to reconsider 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