

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 001847
Date 8 January 2018

Planning Permission/Building Control

Request:

I would like to request some information from you under the Freedom of Information act relating to planning permission/ building control, and the advice from Fire & Rescue Services. I would like to know:

- In 2017, how many applications submitted to your Local Authority Planning permission/ Building Control were shown to your local fire & rescue service for comment & advice?

Your request for information has now been considered and the City of Wolverhampton Council is not obliged to supply the information you requested for the reasons set out below.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires City of Wolverhampton Council, when refusing to provide such information (because the information is exempt) to provide you, the applicant with a notice which:

- (a) states the fact,
- (b) specifies the exemption in question and
- (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies:

In relation to your particular request, the following exemption applies:

Section 12 - Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

With reference to question 1, we can confirm that the Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request. However, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows a public authority to refuse a request if the cost of providing the information to the applicant would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 18 hours of work). In estimating the cost of complying with a request for information, an authority can only take into account any reasonable costs incurred in:

- (a) Determining whether it holds the information
- (b) Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information
- (c) Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information
- (d) Extracting the information from a document containing it.

For the purposes of the estimate the costs of performing these activities should be estimated at a rate of £25 per hour.

The information appertaining to your request is not easily accessible as the information is not held in a format that enables us to interrogate our database and therefore we would have to manually trawl each and every application for 2017.

However, I can inform you that where a fire service believes there is a planning application of interest they will contact the case officer on an individual basis and discuss any potential issues.

Building Control do consult with the fire service on applications which are subject to the RRO (Regulatory Reform Order) and this is recorded against each application.

- Do you keep records of the advice received from your local fire & rescue service?
Please see our response above relating to question 1.
- How many of those applications (2017) did not meet local fire service advised specifications & guidance, in the opinion of that fire service?
- your local fire & rescue service?
Please see our response above relating to question 1.

Once again, we would have to look at each individual application sent to the fire service for both planning and building regulations in 2017. In addition to this point, building control officers generally ensure the scheme is acceptable before consulting with the fire service and therefore the majority of applications should comply with their requirements.

- How many applications were granted regardless of local fire service advice not having been met (in the opinion of that fire service) i.e. where a difference of opinion occurred?
As far as Building Control are concerned any advice issued by the fire service necessary to ensure compliance with the building regulations will be incorporated into the scheme.