

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 001891
Date 23 January 2018

Customer Contact

Request:

I'm interested in understanding how local residents are interacting with their local council, and would like to submit an FOI request for the following data in xls format:

- 1) Breakdown of volumes of contact (15/16 and 16/17) for the following channels:
 - Face to face: 2015/16 = 120,364; 2016/17 = 160,947
 - Telephone: 2015/16 = 594,635; 2016/17 = 636,799
 - Online: 2015/16 = 2,561,153; 2016/17 = 3,476,764

Please note, we implemented a new queue management system to log face to face contacts to improve and enhance our recording of such data, this is reflected in the variance between the two financial years.

Online contacts have been classified as unique visitors to our corporate website.

- 2) For 2016/17, please provide a breakdown of contact by the following type of transaction:
 - Application – e.g. applying for services or career opportunities;
 - Payments – e.g. paying for a range of fees, fines or taxes;
 - Tracking – e.g. monitoring progress service requests and applications;
 - Booking and reservations – e.g. making appointments with the council, and booking items and events;
 - Renewals – e.g. renewing items like permits and licences;
 - Reporting – e.g. notifying the council of problems and issues that need addressing;
 - Finding information – e.g. locating and requesting information on local services and tourism.

Your question 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

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,*
- and*
- (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 question is not easily accessible and as such this information is not held as a distinct set able to be retrieved or reported on. To get the information would require a full scale look into all individual records. This would be a manual exercise and as such we believe that the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).

Excess cost removes the City of Wolverhampton Council's obligation under the Freedom of Information, however under Section 16 – (the duty to provide advice and assistance, the Council can provide a full list of enquiry types for the given period if required

- 3) For 2016/17, breakdown of telephone enquiries by your services or service areas (e.g. revenues and benefits, parking, housing, planning etc).
See above.