

Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 002908
Date 26 October 2018

Spend on Media, Consultation and Employees

Request:

I would greatly appreciate if you could please send me the requested information in relation to the questions specified below. The questions are:

- Does the council pay for Facebook advertising?
Yes.

If so, what was the annual expenditure for the 2017/18 financial year?
The annual expenditure for the 2017/18 financial year was £20,743.

The council uses this medium to promote events and campaigns such as 'Fostering for Wolverhampton' where the target audience frequently uses this channel to obtain information.

- How much did the council spend on print media or advertisements in the 2017/18 financial year?
The total spent on the above was £203,700. This included a significant amount on paid-for statutory public and planning notices where the authority has a statutory obligation to publish the information in the local newspaper that best covers the local population area.
- How much did the council spend on radio media or advertisements in the 2017/18 financial year?
The total spent on the above was £10,610.
- How much did the council spend on television media or advertisements in the 2017/18 financial year?
The council spent £2,900 in 2017/2018 on regional TV advertising as part of a regional collaboration within the West Midlands to increase the number of foster carers in the area and thus better support vulnerable children and young people.

What was the council's total budget for Communications / Public Relations (PR) in the 2017/18 financial year (this includes officers, publications, newsletters, advertisements or any other materials or expenditure linked to communications/ PR)?

The total net controllable expenditure budget for the central Corporate Communications Team was £825,510 in 2017-2018. This includes employee costs, running expenditure and externally generated income. The corresponding outturn was £755,447, a saving of £70,063 compared to budget. Over the next two financial years, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, ongoing cost reductions have already been identified reducing the budget by £92,000. The Council's wider marketing budget beyond the central Corporate Communications Team was £821,810 in 2017-18.

How many Communications / Public Relations Officers (or any other officers with a different title providing a similar role) does the council currently employ? Please specify whether they are full-time or part-time and how many hours they are contracted to work.

The council employs 16 full-time Communications / Public Relations Officers, each contracted to work 37 hours a week.

What was the council's total budget for Consultation in the 2017/18 financial year (this includes officers, paid for software or any other costs)?

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

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 request is not easily accessible as responsibility for consultation, in all its forms, is delegated to individual teams and departments within the Council. 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 each team/department's own systems and financial 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).

- How many Consultation Officers (or any other officers with a different title providing a similar role) does the council currently employ? Please specify whether they are full-time or part-time and how many hours they are contracted to work.
Please see response to final question.
- Does the council pay for surveying software and/ or engagement software (examples include, but are not limited to, SurveyMonkey, Smart Survey, Snap Surveys or Citizenspace)? If yes, please tell us all the surveying/engagement software(s) you use and how much they cost per year?
We use SurveyMonkey at a cost of £336 per year.
- What was the council's total budget for Community/ Resident Engagement in the 2017/18 financial year (this includes officers, materials or any expenditure linked to the council's Community/ Resident Engagement work)?
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.

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However, the employee costs for the post below are £34,000.

How many Community/ Resident Engagement Officers (or any other officers with a different title providing a similar role) does the council currently employ? Please specify whether they are full-time or part-time and how many hours they are contracted to work.

The Council currently employs one Consultation and Community Involvement Officer for 3 days a week, so 0.6 FTE.