

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Your request for information has now been considered and the Council's response to your questions is shown below.

You asked:

Please list the job-titles of all your employees who work directly with private sector owners to bring private sector empty property back into use for housing and for each job-title listed, please give the "Full-time-equivalent" resource dedicated to empty homes work (See Note below). "Private sector" does not include housing association properties.

ANSWER:

Empty & Decent Homes Team Leader 0.5
Empty Homes Officer 1 FTE
Empty Homes Officer 0.5
Empty Homes Officer 0.5
Generic Administration Business Support Officer – 1 FTE
Total = 3.5 FTE

The 2012-13 budget for the staff listed above, together with associated revenue costs of our empty homes work is £103,640.

Of the FTE resource identified above how much is on time-limited contracts (i.e. not permanent positions, agency staff etc)?

1 temporary agency staff to cover long term sickness for 1 Empty Homes Officer i.e. 1 FTE post

How much New Homes Bonus, if any, was allocated by your council in 2012-13 specifically to bringing empty homes back into use or other aspects of your empty homes initiative?

New Homes Bonus constitutes part of the Council's general fund budget resources and is not separately earmarked. The funding for NHB was top-sliced from the overall local government formula grant when it was established. The Council does have a specific capital programme provision in 2012-13 of £50,000 to fund its' losses from compulsorily purchasing empty homes and selling them on.

How much unused capacity (in pounds sterling) do you currently have (in 2012-13) to take on prudential borrowing under prudential borrowing rules?

The Council is required by law to set an "authorised limit" on borrowing which cannot be exceeded. The current limits are:

	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
Borrowing	402	444	432
Other forms of liability	128	137	133
Total	530	581	565

“Other forms of liability” relate to private finance initiative schemes, and similar.

Actual external debt is £252m, and hence in one sense the Council could borrow approximately £150m in the current year, and more in later years.

In practice these figures can't be taken at face value because these include borrowing which may be undertaken for short term reasons, and this should be distinguished from the long-term borrowing use to fund new capital expenditure.

The most important issue is that the ultimate constraint on a Council's ability to borrow is its ability to service the interest payments and to repay the loans, and this is a direct charge to the Council's general fund revenue budget which as you will be aware is under severe pressure.

You will see from the foregoing that in principle the Council has a very high capacity to invest in schemes of this sort, but that in practice affordability is the key issue.

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If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request please write to:

**Information Governance Manager
Information and Customer Access
Leicester City Council
FREEPOST (LE985/33)
New Walk Centre
LEICESTER LE1 6ZG**

e-mail: info.requests@leicester.gov.uk

Your request for internal review should be submitted to the above address within 40 (forty) working days of receipt by you of this response. Any such request received after this time will only be considered at the Council's absolute discretion.

You can also complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House

Water Lane

Wilmslow SK9 5AF

Telephone: 01625 545 700

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Please be aware that the Information Commissioner does not normally consider appeals or complaints until the internal appeals and complaints processes of the public authority which is answering the request have been exhausted. You are therefore advised to complain or appeal to the Information Governance Manager before contacting the Commissioner.