

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 can you provide me with the following information on the total amount the council spent last year on:

Chauffeurs

ANSWER:

LCC does not employ dedicated chauffeurs. Civic attendants accompany the Lord Mayor during civic engagements which may include driving civic vehicles. The service is provided in house.

There are occasions where external drivers may be employed and for 2011-12 the cost was £199.75.

Taxis

The total cost for 2011-12 was £34,277.

Publicity and public relations

The total cost for 2011-12 was £629,886.

This excludes the cost of recruitment advertising.

Christmas Trees and decorations

There is an expectation that within administrative buildings, staff should use decorations used in previous years or purchase any new ones at their own personal expense.

The 2011-12 cost of Christmas trees and decorations in public places was £167,403.

£11,367 of this was for the purchase of three trees externally displayed in the city centre. The remainder of the cost was for city centre external lighting and decoration display.

Stationary

The total cost for 2011-12 was £292,260.

Office refreshments (biscuits, tea and coffee)

The cost of refreshments for internal meetings, seminars and conferences cannot be easily identified as current finance system coding does not separately identify costs for service users and staff. The work required to undertake this analysis would exceed the cost limit in retrieving the information, which would involve manual analysis of over a thousand invoices. However, the authority's "Catering Hospitality Policy" states that "for internal meetings and events beverages can only be provided in circumstances where attendees are away from their normal workplace. Biscuits/cakes/pastries are not to be provided."

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for local government is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending more than 18 hours in determining whether the department holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

This is therefore a Refusal Notice under section 17.1 of the Freedom of Information Act, because under the provisions of section 12.1 of the Act, the Council estimates that to comply with your request in its current form will exceed the appropriate limit.

Overseas trips

To determine the total cost of overseas trips would exceed the cost limit in retrieving the information. This would involve manual exercises to match up the individually coded elements of each trip (e.g. flights, accommodation, food/drink, other travel etc.) to determine which related to an overseas trip from thousands of transactions.

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However, flight costs are separately recorded and easily identifiable as an overseas trip cost. A total cost of £11,632 was paid in 2011-12 for flights. £5,000 of which related to flights for Looked after Children as prescribed by the courts.

The legislation allows you to use the information supplied for your own personal use. Please be aware that any commercial or other use, for example publication, sale, or redistribution may be a breach of copyright under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 as amended unless you obtain the copyright holder's prior permission.

Not all the information that is supplied which is covered by copyright will be the Council's copyright, for example it may be the copyright of a government department or another Council. You should seek either the Council's consent or their consent as appropriate. The Council is willing to advise you of any such potential issues on request. In order to make a request to re-use the information please contact the Information Governance Manager using the details below.

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.