

Freedom Of Information - Requests

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides details on frequent subjects requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as requested by Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the report.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Audit and Accounts Committee is responsible for providing assurance to the Council on the effectiveness of the governance arrangements, risk management framework and internal control environment.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 At its meeting on 31 October 2012, Committee requested that the Head of Governance and Assurance provide members with a break down by category of the most common areas/issues about which the Council receives Freedom of Information requests.
- 4.2 Since the Freedom of Information Act came into force, the Council has received 4025 requests (as at 14 November 2012) under the legislation. Appendix 2 contains a list of the most common requests since 1 January 2005.

4.3 The table below shows the breakdown of these 4025 requests by category of requester:

FOI Request from	Number
Commercial	943
Media	892
Personal	1756
Other Local Authority	51
Political	257
Total	3899

There are a further 126 requests that are categorised as undefined. These are as a result of modifications that have made to the FOI database over time and the changes to the category options.

4.4 The frequent top ten subjects for FOI requests in 2012 are shown below:

Staffing – numbers of staff, salaries, social worker posts (CYP and Adults), Contractors and Consultants, structure charts

Non Domestic Rates – Rateable values, Empty properties

Finance – Budgets, savings, cuts, investments

Adult Social Care – cost cutting activities, services provided, homecare, enablement, adult disabilities

CYP – Exclusions, children looked after, school places

Waste – Waste collections, fines, Sinfin waste site, recycling

Environmental Health – Public burials where there is no known next of kin (Heir Hunters), inspection information, premises licences, taxi licensing

Planning – planning applications, planning disputes

Parking – Number of penalty notices issued, number of penalty notices appealed, income from car parking.

Council House – Council House refurbishment

- 4.5 The Governance Board is looking at the potential to include more information on the Council's website under the Open Data/Transparency agenda in an attempt to reduce the number of FOI requests which will cover all of the common request areas, where appropriate.
- 4.6 The topic of FOI requests is influenced by current issues. Specific news stories can generate a number of FOI requests.
- 4.7 The range of FOI requests is very wide and the Council has received some strange ones since January 2005:
- Preparations the Council is making for the Zombie Apocolypse
 - Are employees permitted to take the birthday of Ron.L.Hubbard as a religious holiday, as observed by Scientologists.
 - How many vegans over the age of 65, are in receipt of care services from DCC.
 - Information on whether the council's employees enjoy doing puzzles, prefer watching films and are allowed to listen to the radio whilst at work.
 - How many Nintendo DS's or DS Lites have DCC purchased in each year since 2004.
- 4.8 The Council is pro-active in complying with the Freedom of Information Act. This means that we are not subject to intrusive review or enforcement by the ICO.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None noted.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	N/A
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Service Director(s)	N/A
Other(s)	Chief Officer Group

For more information contact:	Richard Boneham Head of Governance and Assurance, 01332 643280 richard.boneham@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Implications

Appendix 2 – Common FOI requests since Jan 2005

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

1.1 None directly arising.

Legal

2.1 None directly arising.

Personnel

3.1 None directly arising.

Equalities Impact

4.1 None directly arising.

Health and Safety

5.1 None directly arising.

Environmental Sustainability

6.1 None directly arising.

Asset Management

7.1 None directly arising.

Risk Management

8.1 Sound risk management practices are a key principle of good governance.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

9.1 The governance framework includes arrangements to plan and monitor delivery of the Council's priorities.

The Common subjects for FOI requests since January 2005

Human Resources:

- Number of employees suspended / dismissed / made redundant.
- Number of grievances raised.
- Number of complaints.
- Total full time equivalent numbers (temporary and permanent).
- Number of employees with salaries of £50,000 and over £100,000.
- Pay scales.
- Number of teachers suspended.
- Cost of contractors / consultants.
- Total amount of salary overpayments.
- Compensation claims.
- Total amount paid to recruitment agencies.
- List of job vacancies advertised.
- Full structure / organisational charts with job titles Tiers 1 – 3.

Employee benefits:

- Mileage rates paid to employees.
- Expenses claimed by the Chief Executive.
- Annual leave available to employees.

Pensions:

- Number of retired employees.
- Number of employees who took early voluntary retirement.
- Payment contributions by Derby City Council.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act:

- Number of times powers are invoked and reasons why.

Mayoral Vehicle:

- The cost of running the civic car.

Democratic Services:

- Name and address of every registered polling station.
- Number of people on full and edited electoral register.

Councillors:

- Councillor allowances and expenses.

Overseas Visits:

- Overseas travel by Councillors and officers to include date of travel, destination, duration of trip, mode of transport and total cost.

Non-Domestic Rates:

- List of non domestic rate accounts in credit.
- Details of current bailiff service provider.
- List of non domestic rate accounts with a rateable value below £15,000 not in receipt of small business rate relief.
- Addresses and rateable value of empty commercial properties.

Council Tax:

- Total outstanding council tax by ward.
- Total amount collected / total amount written off in the current financial year.

Benefits:

- Highest weekly / monthly payment.
- Number of benefit claimants.

Finance:

- Breakdown of council money invested in foreign banks or other financial institutions.
- Total cost of all translation services including BSL interpreting services.

Procurement:

- Approved suppliers / framework agreements.
- Contracts Register.
- Building School's for the Future information.

ICT:

- Total ICT expenditure.
- ICT strategy.

Older people residential care / home care:

- Homecare rates
- Names of homecare providers

Empty Properties:

- List of empty / vacant residential properties (owned by commercial companies only).
- List of empty / vacant commercial properties (owned by the Council).

Disabilities:

- Number of applications made for disabled facilities grant.

Anti-Social Behaviour:

- CCTV information.

Waste management:

- Recycled household waste.
- Prosecutions / fine / warnings for breaches of bin and recycling rules.

Child Protection:

- Total number of children looked after.
- Children taken into care and reasons - broken down by age.
- Children taken into care on interim care orders and emergency protection orders.
- Adoption and fostering statistics.
- Number of children on 'at risk' register.
- Executive summaries of serious case reviews.
- Number of child abuse cases investigated.

Schools:

- Primary and secondary children home educated.
- Number of applications received (by school).
- Catchment areas.
- Permanent and temporary exclusions from both primary and secondary school with reasons / duration.

Environmental Health:

- Number of noise abatement notices issued.
- Details of deceased individuals who have no next of kin and referred to the Treasury Solicitor.

Taxi licensing and taxi drivers:

- Number of private hire / hackney carriage licenses issued.
- Details of taxi drivers criminal convictions.
- Details of complaints against taxi drivers.

Parking:

- Number of traffic penalty notices issued.
- Number of parking tickets issued.
- Income generated by parking fines.
- Income generated by parking spaces / car parks.
- Successful appeals against parking tickets.

Assets and planning:

- List of Council owned sports facilities.
- S106 expenditure breakdown and allocation.
- Number of planning applications received.