



Reference: RFI 1707028

Request:

I would like to know the amount of money the council spent on the services of external law firms and barristers in the last years (year ending March 31 2017). If this is not possible within the restrictions of the Freedom of Information Act, one year of data will suffice.

Response:

The Authority's Legal Services Team expenditure on external barristers and law firms was as follows:

2014/15	£68,903.99
2015/16	£92,644.30
2016/17	£43,896.33

This is not an Authority wide expenditure figure but only represents the expenditure by the legal team only.

The Council's Law and Governance Service provide advice and services to all the Authority's services and externally sourced legal advice would be sought on behalf of those other services. The detail of the cost of these external services would not necessarily be recorded against Law & Governance as services are sometimes required to meet the cost of external advice from their own budgets. Therefore, a search via all services across the Authority would be required to establish expenditure on external law firms and barristers. This would require identifying this specific spend under a number of budget expenditure codes which also contain non legal expenditure requiring a line by line review . Therefore this part of the request is refused under s12 (1) Freedom of Information Act 2000, since the cost of complying would exceed the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

In assessing the cost of complying, the costs attributable to officer time involved in complying have been taken into account. Such costs are limited to £450.00 under the Regulations, which equates to eighteen hours of officer time.