

FOI number: **HBC_FOI_2019013**
 Date FOI Received: **05/01/2019**
 Department: **Finance**
 Title: **Consultants**
 Description: **The number, cost and breakdown of consultants used to provide the Council with advice for 2016, 2017, 2018.**

Request: *(As Redacted sent by requestor)*

I wish to request, under the Freedom of Information Act, that you supply me with:
 The following Information regarding the use of consultants by the council (i.e. Anyone taken in from an outside body to advice the authority on any matter).

- A) The number of consultants used by the council in
 1) 2018
 2) 2017
 3) 2016

- B) The cost to the council of the use of consultants in
 1) 2018
 2) 2017
 3) 2016

- C) A breakdown by project and hours worked of the number of consultants used by the council in
 1) 2018
 2) 2017
 3) 2016

Please can you provide the information in the below format

Year	2018				2017				2016			
Item	Num ber of consu ltants	Cost of Cons ultant s	Nu mb er of Proj ects	Nu mb er of Ho urs Wo rke d	Num ber of consu ltants	Cost of Cons ultant s	Nu mb er of Proj ects	Nu mb er of Ho urs Wo rke d	Num ber of consu ltants	Cost of Cons ultant s	Nu mb er of Proj ects	Nu mb er of Ho urs Wo rke d
ANS WE R	X	X	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Public Interest

I believe there is a strong public interest in releasing this information since it will promote greater transparency in government and greater accountability in the conduct of those who hold public office.

The information requested is not reasonably accessible by other means to the best of my knowledge.

Commercial interests

I do not believe that any of the information I have requested is exempt from disclosure as a result of the exemption provided by section 43 of the Act. However, should you judge that parts of the material requested would come under this exemption, I request that you *redact the relevant sections* and release the documents in their entirety.

For example, should you believe that the identification of suppliers that may result from disclosing the invoices received would prejudice that company's commercial interests, then I request that you redact the details of the supplier from the documents you release.

Confidentiality issues

Exemptions on the 'information being provided in confidence' do not apply. The Information Commissioner advises, "information which is protected from disclosure by an obligation of confidence must have the necessary 'quality of confidence'" (*Freedom of Information Act Awareness Guidance No 2*).

Where it is considered that under the FOI Act certain parts of documents requested breach confidentiality issues, I would request that these sections be redacted and the documents be released in their entirety.

Redacting personal information is a common practice - It is not acceptable to refuse to release a document simply because it contains elements of personal information that could be redacted.

Data protection issues.

I am not requesting personal information. Where necessary personal details may be redacted from any documents that you release.

Redacting personal information is a common practice - It is not acceptable to refuse to release a document simply because it contains elements of personal information that could be redacted.

Processing of these requests

I would like to receive this information by email, sent to: <REDACTED>

Further to section 16 of the FOI Act (duty to provide advice and assistance), if you have any queries relating to these requests or need clarification on any issue, I would be grateful if you could contact me.

I would like to request that any refusal to any part of the above requests (including on cost grounds) be accompanied by a recommendation of how the request may be modified so as to be granted.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this email and provide me with FOI reference number(s) as soon as possible.

With thanks,

Response: (Response as Redacted sent by service)

A) The number of consultants used by the council in

- | | |
|---------|----|
| 1) 2018 | 37 |
| 2) 2017 | 26 |
| 3) 2016 | 35 |

B) The cost to the council of the use of consultants in

1) 2018 £355,915

2) 2017 £624,049

3) 2016 £258,522

C) This information is not held.

If you have any queries about the processing of your request then please do not hesitate to contact me. Further information explaining the Council's process for responding to information requests together with a complaints/appeals procedure is available in our reception or via our website at:

<https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Your-Council/Official-Publications--Guides--Policies/Access-to-Information.aspx>

The Information Commissioner oversees the application of the Freedom of Information Act. You may contact the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioners Office
Wycliffe House, Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545700
Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Please include the above reference number on all correspondence related to this request.

Thank you for your request.

Kind regards

Information Services

Hertsmere Borough Council | Civic Offices | Elstree Way | Borehamwood | Herts |
WD6 1WA

t: 020 8207 2277

email: foi@hertsmere.gov.uk