

11 June 2019
Our ref: 5324428

Thank you for your request received on 13 May 2019, for the following information:

1. The Grand Arcade is a private building as far as I am aware, it is not owned by the local authority and it's retail offer is surely not a matter for the council?

2. How the council came to the conclusion that the Grand Arcade had 'continued to underperform in terms of its retail offer'. Was a survey commissioned by Barnet Council, Re or G.L. Hearn who wrote the report? If so, where is the report for the survey in the public realm, where is the evidence? Where are the statistics?

3. Did the council carry out a detailed footfall study? How, when and where are the results? How was the 'underperformance' quantified, i.e. was it compared to other shops in the vicinity? The Grand Arcade is unique in this part of North London, there is nothing to compare it to, so what was it compared to and what does the word 'underperformance' look like on paper as statistics?

4. Did Barnet Council, Re or G.L. Hearn access the accounts of the businesses within the Arcade with or without permission?

And was a detailed chart produced showing year-on-year profit/loss and accounts for a set period of time? Where is the data? Or is it deemed commercially sensitive and has therefore been omitted? If it was then why wasn't this referred to in the SPD?

5. The Council would have supported the North Finchley Town Team as part of its 'commitment to supporting economic success across the borough'. How was the £380k LBB investment monitored, scrutinised and reported by LBB? Did it lead to economic success for the Grand Arcade? With such a large investment and support how did the Grand Arcade continue to underperform? Where is the data?

6. The SPD states the word 'continues to underperform', the word 'continues' is very important. I'd like to know from what date it 'continued' to underperform?

7. In what other ways (i.e. advice/consultation) was the Arcade supported by the Council from 2015?

9. When did the 3 shops in the Arcade stop being controlled by the Town Team and did the Council take over those shops?

8. What happened to the North Finchley Town Team? Why did it stop operating?

10. Did the Town Team have to report to Barnet Council in relation to the 3 shops it controlled in the Arcade?

11. Where is the data showing the successes and footfall of the Town Team's activities/initiatives in the Arcade?

We have processed this request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Response

I can confirm that London Borough of Barnet holds the information you requested. However, we consider that the following exceptions apply to some of the information requested.

We consider that Regulation 6(1)(b) applies to the information requested because the information requested is already publicly available and easily accessible.

1. The Grand Arcade is a private building as far as I am aware, it is not owned by the local authority and it's retail offer is surely not a matter for the council?

The Grand Arcade is an integral part of a block of commercial buildings which form part of site 1 – Tally Ho Triangle and Arts Depot – as identified in the North Finchley Town Centre Framework SPD. These buildings are in private ownership. As one of Barnet's largest town centres, the success of North Finchley, including the retail offer, is a matter for the Council. It has produced the SPD in order to create a successful, thriving town centre where people want to live, work and spend time.

2. How the council came to the conclusion that the Grand Arcade had 'continued to underperform in terms of its retail offer'. Was a survey commissioned by Barnet Council, Re or G.L. Hearn who wrote the report? If so, where is the report for the survey in the public realm, where is the evidence? Where are the statistics?

The Council conducts surveys of the units in all its town centres every two years. The results for the Grand Arcade are attached. Please refer to the Planning Portal for explanation of use classes. The Arcade is designated as secondary frontage in the Local Plan. The Council's consultants who produced the North Finchley SPD published a Baseline Report.

<https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/1223/documents/1141>

The report sets out a baseline position upon which the North Finchley Town Centre SPD was developed. The Report highlights vacancy rates in the Tally Ho Triangle which suffers from the traffic island effect and hosts the Grand Arcade, with the 15 small units in the enclosed space struggling to maintain long lets despite investment.

3. Did the council carry out a detailed footfall study? How, when and where are the results? How was the 'underperformance' quantified, i.e. was it compared to other shops in the vicinity? The Grand Arcade is unique in this part of North London, there is nothing to compare it to, so what was it compared to and what does the word 'underperformance' look like on paper as statistics?

The summary results of the Council's survey of town centres are published in the Authorities Monitoring Report. See sections 14 and 15.

https://www.barnet.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/citizenportal/documents/planning_conservationandbuildingcontrol/PlanningPolicy/LocalPlan/AMR201617Barnet.pdf

4. Did Barnet Council, Re or G.L. Hearn access the accounts of the businesses within the Arcade with or without permission?

And was a detailed chart produced showing year-on-year profit/loss and accounts for a set period of time? Where is the data? Or is it deemed commercially sensitive and has therefore been omitted? If it was then why wasn't this referred to in the SPD?

N/A

5. The Council would have supported the North Finchley Town Team as part of its 'commitment to supporting economic success across the borough'. How was the £380k LBB investment monitored, scrutinised and reported by LBB? Did it lead to economic success for the Grand Arcade? With such a large investment and support how did the Grand Arcade continue to underperform? Where is the data?

Project monitoring was consistent with standard council practice at the time and covered a range of issues including project delivery, budgets and risk.

The project was seen to have delivered economic benefit commensurate with the size of the council's investment. An underperforming space was activated, providing opportunities for start-up and creative businesses.

However, the Grand Arcade, alongside the wider town centre, has continued to struggle with a challenging retail market and evolving shopping habits and has unfortunately continued to deteriorate despite the council's investment.

6. The SPD states the word 'continues to underperform', the word 'continues' is very important. I'd like to know from what date it 'continued' to underperform?

For clarification the adopted SPD makes no specific reference to the performance of the Grand Arcade. The comments on performance form part of the SPD Consultation Report which was reported to Committee in February 2018.

7. In what other ways (i.e. advice/consultation) was the Arcade supported by the Council from 2015?

As far as we are aware, no further advice has been provided to the Grand Arcade outside of this project.

8. What happened to the North Finchley Town Team? Why did it stop operating?

A Town Team dedicated to improving North Finchley Town Centre was set up by local groups and individuals and launched in March 2013. The team is no longer operational. Their last activity was recorded in 2015. The council does not have powers to force businesses to participate in networks such as Town Teams.

9. When did the 3 shops in the Arcade stop being controlled by the Town Team and did the Council take over those shops?

The Council held a lease for units 10-12 from February 2013 until February 2017. At the time, unit 12 was vacated. The council continued to lease units 10 and 11 until June 2018.

The lease of three of the shops, (10, 11 and 12) was held by a not for profit company "Ten Grand Arcade" which grew out of the town team. Their lease was until February 2017. The council took on the leases of numbers 10 & 11 from 1 April 2017. The third unit was leased directly by the charity Art Against Knives directly from the landlord, also from April 17. This arrangement continued for just over a year, and numbers 10 & 11 were handed back in June 2018.

10. Did the Town Team have to report to Barnet Council in relation to the 3 shops it controlled in the Arcade?

Information was provided by the Town Team throughout project delivery.

11. Where is the data showing the successes and footfall of the Town Team's activities/initiatives in the Arcade?

Commensurate with the size of the investment, detailed impact data such as this was not collected.

Further information

If you are interested in the data that the council holds you may wish to visit Open Barnet, the council's data portal. This brings together all our published datasets and other information of interest on one searchable database for anyone, anywhere to access. <http://open.barnet.gov.uk/>

Advice and Assistance : Direct Marketing

If you are a company that intends to use the names and contact details of council officers (or other officers) provided in this response for direct marketing, you need to be registered with the Information Commissioner to process personal data for this purpose. You must also check that the individual (whom you wish to contact for direct marketing purposes) is not registered with one of the Preference Services to prevent Direct Marketing. If they are you must adhere to this preference.

You must also ensure you comply with the Privacy Electronic and Communications Regulations (PECR). For more information follow this Link www.ico.org.uk

For the avoidance of doubt the provision of council (and other) officer names and contact details under FOI does not give consent to receive direct marketing via any media and expressly does not constitute a 'soft opt-in' under PECR.

Your rights

If you are unhappy with the way your request for information has been handled, you can request a review within the next 40 working days by writing to the Information Management Team at: foi@barnet.gov.uk. Or by post to Information Management Team (FOI) The London Borough of Barnet, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, London, N11 1NP

If, having exhausted our review procedure, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you will have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF (telephone: 0303 123 1113; website www.ico.org.uk). There is no charge for making an appeal.