

30 July 2020
Our ref: 6283488

Thank you for your request received on 6 May 2020, for the following information:

Please provide me with a copy of that account (or accounts if payment was in stages) as presented by the Returning Officer such that I can see what amount has been spent on each broad category of expense (staff, stationery, building hire etc) and how much the election cost in total.

One of the larger expenses after staffing is likely to be the hire of a suitable space for the count to take place.

- Please tell me the location and cost of the space which was hired for the purpose and the time period for which the space was hired.**
- Please also provide a copy of the invoice for that hire and if the detail is not evident from the invoice please tell me what extra services, if any, were provided within the invoiced amount for items other than the pure hire of the space (e.g. refreshments, public address system, security, parking etc).**
- If security was not included in the cost of the hire of the space please provide a copy of the invoices for that service at the count, if indeed there was any such separate workforce.**

We have processed this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Response

I can confirm that London Borough of Barnet holds the information you requested.

However, we consider that the following exemptions apply to some of the information requested. The remaining information is not withheld and is below/attached. [\[delete as appropriate\]](#)

Please provide me with a copy of that account (or accounts if payment was in stages) as presented by the Returning Officer such that I can see what amount has been spent on each broad category of expense (staff, stationery, building hire etc) and how much the election cost in total.

Please see attached a spreadsheet with the high-level costs information, that was provided to the London Borough of Barnet outlining the costs of planning, preparing and delivering all aspects of the Local Government elections that took place in May

2018. Currently, the subordinate sheets that contain the vouchers and invoice details have not been included as these include personal details and payments for the individual election staff members and invoices from a variety of companies that are likely to consider the details to be commercially or personally sensitive (this includes many local schools and community halls etc.).

One of the larger expenses after staffing is likely to be the hire of a suitable space for the count to take place.

- Please tell me the location and cost of the space which was hired for the purpose and the time period for which the space was hired.

Allianz Park (Greenlands Ln, Hendon, London NW4 1RL) was hired for the Local Election 2018 count.

It was hired from 8am on 3 May 2018 to 6pm on 4 May 2018.

- Please also provide a copy of the invoice for that hire and if the detail is not evident from the invoice please tell me what extra services, if any, were provided within the invoiced amount for items other than the pure hire of the space (e.g. refreshments, public address system, security, parking etc).

With specific reference to the request to view the invoice for the use of the Count Venue (East Stand – Allianz Park), this has not been supplied as there is a high likelihood of harm to the ability of both the council and it's contractor by damaging its ability to negotiate the best price in a competitive market environment.

Please see Section 43 refusal notice below.

- If security was not included in the cost of the hire of the space please provide a copy of the invoices for that service at the count, if indeed there was any such separate workforce.

Apart from some core venue specific security personnel (Inc. Venue Management staff and a Health and Safety Manager), the event security was managed directly by members of the elections staff of the Returning Officer and are therefore included in the overall staffing costs on the attached spreadsheet (there is not a specific 'separate' workforce for security).

We consider that the qualified exemption set out in Section 43 (Prejudicial to commercial interests) subsection 2 applies to the information requested. Therefore, we have decided to withhold the information.

In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the interest in favour of disclosure.

Factors in favour of disclosure

- Improving transparency in decision making and expenditure
- To ensure accountability of the authority

Factors in favour of withholding

- It is not in the public interest to release information that could negatively influence ongoing and future negotiations as this could have an adverse effect on value for money for the council so for residents
- It is not in the public interest to damage the council's commercial interests, as this affects how it spends public money and the services it can provide to residents.
- It is not in the public interest for commercially sensitive information about one company to be released, when information about other companies is not released, as this puts one company at a commercial disadvantage.
- It is not in the public interest to disclose information that would be likely to damage the commercial interests of a company, as this could lead to financial problems for the company and/or job losses.

In all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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) London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW

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.

