



London Borough of Barnet,
2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale,
London NW9 4EW
11 January 2021
Our ref: 6853596

Thank you for your request received on 9 December 2020, for the following information:

I wish to request, under the Freedom of Information Act, that you supply me with:

The total amount of money spent on celebrity events or visits organised by the council during the year 2020 to date, 2019 and as many years for which records are available.

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.

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

Response

The council holds the information requested and it is attached/ the answers to your questions are below:

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The only area I have identified for the use of celebrities has been for the annual staff awards, however there has been no use of celebrities for them in recent years.

Bob Mills was a guest at the 2016 and 2017 but the council received sponsorship to pay for this.

Carrie Grant was present at the October 2019 Special Education and Disability Needs conference and the cost was £1500 plus VAT.

Libraries have in the past used authors for library events but because of the Covid restrictions this has not happened recently.

The Christmas Lights are switched on without celebrity involvement as part of the street lighting contract.

I have identified no other use of celebrities.

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.