

30 July 2021
Our ref: 7486996

Thank you for your request received on 5 July 2021, for the following information:

I would like to request the following information from you regarding Green Belt under the FOI and EIR legislation.

***How many meetings (including online) and telephone calls have council officers and councillors had with developers from January 2019 to the present day?**

***How many meetings (including online) and telephone calls have council officers and councillors had with owners of green belt and their representatives/agents (including consultants, legal reps etc.) land from January 2019 to the present day?**

***Please can you release any emails/correspondence between developers and owners of greenbelt (including their representatives/consultants etc) and the council (including councillors and their staff and council owned companies) concerning Green Belt from January 2019 to the present day?**

***Please can I see the registers of hospitality from January 2019 to your most current entries 2021?**

***Please can you release the minutes of meetings in which Green Belt was discussed or mentioned from January 2019 to the present day?**

***Please can you release any correspondence, minutes, advice provided, and logs of private meetings between planning inspectors and council officers and councillors?**

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

Response

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

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***Please can you release any correspondence, minutes, advice provided, and logs of private meetings between planning inspectors and council officers and councillors?**

We may hold some of the information requested. I can confirm that no gifts/hospitality were received for green belt planning applications.

I have attached the Planning Officers Gifts and Hospitality Register.

The Councillor Gifts and Hospitality Register can be located at the following link [Find Councillor \(moderngov.co.uk\)](https://www.moderngov.co.uk) by selecting each Councillor in turn, selecting the date period of interest and clicking through to each Cllr name.

Refusal Notice

R12(4) (b) the request for information is manifestly unreasonable

Regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 provides an exception to the disclosure of information in situations where the request is manifestly unreasonable. This exception may be invoked where the request places a substantial and unreasonable cost or burden of dealing with it. Information. The purpose of the exception is to protect public authorities from exposure to a disproportionate burden or an unjustified level of distress, disruption or irritation, in handling information requests.

This is a qualified exception under EIR which means that consideration must also be given to whether in all the circumstances of the case the public interest favouring disclosure is greater than the public interest in maintaining the exemption. The public interest means what is in the best interests to the public.

Public interest test considerations

I have considered whether the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information requested. There are a number of

public interest arguments that weigh in favour of disclosing the information you have sought:

- * The general proposition of maximising openness to which the EIR and the Council aspire ;
- * The benefits of ensuring transparent and accountable government

However, there are also public interest arguments against disclosure:

- * It does not represent a cost effective use of the Council's resources, there are 70 planners, and the Local Planning Authority receives 6000 Applications a year. It would take approximately 15 minutes to search each application to locate the information requested. In addition there are 63 Councillors who would also need to search their information holdings, again each would need 15 minutes to search their records.

(15 minutes times 15000 Applications divided by 60 minutes, plus 63 Councillors = 3,809 hrs)

- * The diversion of resources that will be necessary in providing the information requested negatively impact on its ability to deliver its core functions

The Council considers that the public interest in withholding the requested information outweighs the public interest test in disclosure of the requested information.

Advice and Assistance

If you were able to identify a specific site of interest (e.g. by providing an address and postcode) we could carry out further searches

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.