

## Request

- The average annual business rates costs, or current liability payable, for the calendar years 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022
- What is the total value of business rate relief granted by the local authority in the last 12 months
- Of the total number of businesses who applied for business rate relief, how many were successful

Can the above mentioned information please be supplied electronically in excel format and the data be categorised as per the bullet points above.

## Response

We can confirm that we hold the information you requested however are refusing to provide you with the information as we consider exemptions under section 21 apply.

Some of the information you have requested is considered exempt under Section 21 of the Act, which applies to information which is available to you by other means. As this information is reasonably accessible to you by other means, we are not obliged to provide this information to you under the Freedom of Information Act.

Information on published Business rates can be found on [National non-domestic rates collected by councils - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

*With regard to Question 3 of your request.*

Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) relieves a public authority from the obligation to comply with a request for information where the estimated time required to locate, review and extract the information exceeds a certain threshold set out in Regulations.

The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/3244) set out the rules in relation to the cost limit (otherwise called the "appropriate limit"). These Regulations are published by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and are viewable on their web site from this link: [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi\\_20043244\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2004/uksi_20043244_en.pdf)

The Regulations set out the cost limit for Government departments and for other public authorities. For local government, Regulation 3 states that the cost limit is £450 and Regulation 4(4) states that the prescribed hourly rate is £25. Regulation 4(4) further provides that where the local authority estimates the time taken to gather the information would exceed this limit (which based on the prescribed hourly rate, equates to 18 officer hours), it may refuse the request under section 12 of FoIA.

I am satisfied the cost limit applies to your request and will explain why this is the case.

We had 10,125 current business accounts just before Xmas. In order to answer question 3 of your request we would need to examine each of these accounts to extract the necessary information. Taking into consideration a modest estimate of just two minutes per account would result in excess of 300 officer hours.