

Request

This is an information request relating to the MJ Awards.

Please include the following information, for the 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020, and 2019 awards:

1. The total amount the council spent from its own budget attending each award ceremony
2. The number of representatives from the council that attended each ceremony (please provide a breakdown of the number of councillors and council officials)
3. The cost of travel for each year, including the mode and class
4. The cost of accommodation for each year, including the name of the hotel or other form of accommodation
5. The agenda for each awards ceremony, including details of the food and drink available, if these documents are available

Response

We do not hold the information that you have requested in an easily retrievable format. 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

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.

The information requested in terms of travel and accommodation would have been booked through purchase cards. Therefore we would need to look through all the transactions to identify the specific information. On average there are 1500 lines of transactions per month which would take approximately one minute to look at each line. If we take the two years where we attended – this would result in:-

1500 transactions x 9 months (as I have assumed the booking of accommodation / travel is done prior to the event) = 13,500 transactions. One minute per transaction to identify receipts = 13,500 minutes / 60 minutes = 225 hours – this being far in excess of the 18 hour officer time stipulated in the act.