



Please accept this as a formal request for information regarding late payments made by the Council to its suppliers, contractors, and sub-contractors during the past six (6) years. Requested Information:

For the period covering the last 6 years from the date of this request (27/03/25), please provide the following:

1. A complete list of all suppliers, contractors, and sub-contractors who have received late payments beyond agreed terms. For each entry, where available, please include:

- Business name
- Business address
- Contact email (where non-personal and appropriate)
- Invoice number(s)
- Invoice issue date(s)
- Payment due date(s)
- Actual payment date(s)
- Invoice amount
- Number of days late (if applicable)
- Whether statutory late payment interest and/or fixed compensation was applied

Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act applies because the release of this information is likely to prejudice the law enforcement or other regulatory activity carried out by the Council namely 'the prevention or detection of crime'.

Disclosure of this information into the public domain is prohibited by Section 31(1)a of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It is the council's view that disclosing the above information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention of crime in that releasing the details of late payments would increase the likelihood of fraudulent claims.

Section 31(1)(a) exemption is subject to the public interest test to consider factors which both favour disclosure of the information and factors in favour of maintaining the exemption.

The council have concluded that the factors in favour of maintaining the exemption outweigh the factors in favour of disclosure. Therefore, the balance of the public interest test is greater in maintaining the exemption under Section 31(1)(a) of the Act.

2. The total amount of late payment interest and/or compensation paid under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998 for each year within this 6-year period.

2019/20 -	£673.82
2020/21 -	£1,780.18
2021/22 -	£2,682.37
2022/23 -	£969.75
2023/24 -	£80.00
2024/25 -	£17,311.27

3. Copies of any current council policies or internal procedures regarding payment terms and practices related to suppliers, contractors, and sub-contractors.

The Council follows Public Contract Regulations 2015 Section 113 for its payment of invoices.

I have also included an extract from our Internal Financial Procedure Rules relating to Payment Procedures.

16 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

16.1 The method of payment of money due from the Council shall be by BACS, Purchase Card, cheque, direct debit or other instrument (including approved electronic transfers such as CHAPS) drawn on the Council's bank account by the Chief Finance Officer.

16.2 Payments by other instruments shall be fully supported by proper, certified documentation in all cases. Loans, leases or rental agreements as methods of payment must not be entered into without the prior approval of the Chief Finance Officer.

16.3 All invoices shall be passed to Chief Finance Officer for processing immediately upon receipt.

16.4 Before approving an invoice, the Approver shall be satisfied that;

- The Goods or Services have been received, or Works carried out, examined and approved. In respect of invoices relating to a purchase order raised on the Corporate Finance System, a Goods Receipt Note will need to be completed electronically before payment can be released.
- The prices, extensions, calculations, trade discounts, other allowances, credits and tax rates are correct.
- The relevant expenditure has been properly incurred and is within the relevant estimate provision.
- Appropriate entries have been made in inventories, stores records or stock books as required.
- The account has not been previously passed for payment and is a proper liability of the Council. In exceptional circumstances, where there is demonstrable financial benefit to the Council, the Chief Finance Officer may authorise payment in advance.

16.5 Payments to sundry creditors shall not be made unless approved by the Chief Finance Officer.

16.6 Chief Officers responsible for any payment systems outside of the Corporate Finance System which either generate a direct payment file or export file to be paid via the Corporate Finance System shall ensure that proper procedures, as approved by the Chief Finance Officer, are in place to validate the payment file. The Certifying Officer for the payment file shall be either a Chief Officer or an appropriate Officer as determined by the relevant Chief Officer and notified to the Chief Finance Officer.

16.7 Payments made by Faster Payment or CHAPS directly from the Council's bank account shall be examined, verified and certified by three separate officers who shall both print and sign their names on the payment pro-forma. The certifying Officer shall be either a Chief Officer or an Approver within the Corporate Finance System as agreed by the relevant Chief Officer and notified to the Chief Finance Officer. The payment request should be emailed by the certifying officer or the certifying officer should be copied in to ensure no subsequent amendments have been made.

16.8 Payments should not be made on any photocopied invoice, statement or document other than a formal invoice whether electronic or paper. Any amendment to a paper invoice shall be made in ink and signed by the Officer making it, stating briefly the reasons where they are not self-evident. No amendments must be made to VAT amounts.

16.9 Each Chief Officer shall, as soon as possible after 31st March in each year and in accordance with the Closedown timetable for that year, notify the Chief Finance Officer of all outstanding expenditure relating to the previous Financial Year.

16.10 Payments made by Purchase Card should be made in accordance with the Authority Council's Purchase Card Rules and procedures. Purchase Cards issued to individuals are for the sole use by the named card holder. Individual card holders are responsible for ensuring that records of all payments are retained, scanned and uploaded in to the Corporate Finance System and that all transactions are reviewed electronically on a monthly basis to ensure that all transactions are valid with the VAT correctly apportioned.

16.11 Chief Officers should ensure that Purchase Card transactions are approved electronically on a monthly basis by an appropriate Officer (Approver).

16.12 A list of all Purchase Card holders and their card limits, shall be issued on an annual basis to the relevant Chief Officer to review.