

Request

This request concerns Platt Bridge Community Zone, 81 Ribble Road, Platt Bridge, Wigan, formerly operated by Abram Ward Community Co-operative Limited, subsequently Abram Ward Community Charity and now Wigan and Leigh Community Charity (company number 08528548). Companies House confirms the organisation's previous names and its registered address at the Community Zone.

For the period from 1 January 2013 to the present date, please provide the following recorded information.

1. Public funding

Please provide details of all payments, grants, loans or other financial assistance provided by Wigan Council to Abram Ward Community Co-operative Limited, Abram Ward Community Charity or Wigan and Leigh Community Charity, including:

- a. the date and amount of each payment;
- b. the funding programme or budget from which the payment was made;
- c. the stated purpose or objectives attached to the funding;
- d. any conditions attached to the funding;
- e. any monitoring or performance requirements attached to the funding; and
- f. any reports or assessments concerning whether those conditions or objectives were met.

This should include both capital and revenue funding and any funding provided directly or indirectly through a Wigan Council programme.

Response

Following consideration of your request for information regarding Platt Bridge Community Zone and associated organisations. Wigan Council is unable to comply with the request in its current form under Section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, as the cost of locating, retrieving and extracting the information requested would exceed the appropriate limit.

Your request covers a period of more than thirteen years, from 1 January 2013 to the present day, and seeks a substantial volume of information across multiple subject areas, including funding arrangements, grant monitoring, property and asset transfer documentation, correspondence, legal advice, performance monitoring, elected member access arrangements, and records relating to councillor surgeries.

To determine, locate, retrieve and review all relevant information, the Council would be required to conduct extensive searches across numerous service areas.

This is particularly challenging due to:

- Multiple organisational and staffing changes over the period covered by the request
- Changes to Council structures and service responsibilities
- Historic changes to ICT systems, record management systems and storage arrangements
- The migration and relocation of electronic records and folders over the time specified
- The need to search both current and archived records held across several departments
- The volume of correspondence, reports and documentation potentially falling within the scope of the request.

The Council estimates that complying with the request would significantly exceed the limit of 18 hours.

Under Section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, public authorities have a duty to provide advice and assistance to applicants where reasonable to do so. To assist you in refining your request so that it may fall within the appropriate limit, You may wish to consider narrowing the scope of your request. For example, you could:

- Reduce the time period covered by the request
- Focus on a specific element of the request, such as funding arrangements, property matters, or councillor access arrangements
- Specify particular documents
- Limit the request to a shorter and more recent timeframe.

As above.

2. Property and Community Asset Transfer

Please provide copies of:

- a. any documents relating to the transfer or lease of Platt Bridge Community Zone to Abram Ward Community Co-operative Limited;
- b. the 4 October 2007 Service Level Agreement referred to in the lease as forming part of the definition of the “Grant Award”; (the Service Level Agreement dated 4 October 2007, concerning the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund funding for the Platt Bridge Community Zone project. The definition also says that the relevant terms and conditions were transferred to the tenant by a deed of novation.)
- c. any grant agreement, funding agreement, grant conditions or associated documentation relating to that Service Level Agreement;
- d. any subsequent variations, amendments, extensions or replacement agreements; and
- e. any documents setting out the Council's understanding of the community purposes and functions which the organisation was required to provide from the premises.

The lease dated 6 August 2014 defines the permitted use as being for “general community benefit to local residents” and requires the tenant

to deliver specified community Outcomes. I am therefore particularly interested in the documents which establish the obligations underlying those Outcomes.

3. Monitoring of the community function

As above.

Please provide copies of any reports, assessments, reviews, correspondence or other recorded information held by the Council concerning the organisation's performance of its community functions at Platt Bridge Community Zone.

This should include, but not be limited to:

- a. monitoring of the Outcomes specified in the lease;
- b. annual reports supplied to the Council;
- c. inspections, audits or reviews;
- d. assessments of the community benefit being delivered;
- e. correspondence concerning compliance with the lease, grant conditions or Service Level Agreement; and
- f. any recorded concerns about the organisation's use or management of the premises.

The lease expressly provides for reporting, inspection and audit concerning delivery of the Outcomes.

4. Access by elected representatives

As above.

Please provide any policy, procedure, guidance, agreement or other recorded information held by Wigan Council concerning the use of Platt Bridge Community Zone by elected representatives, councillors, candidates, political parties or political groups.

In particular, please provide any recorded information concerning:

- a. whether councillors may hold surgeries at the premises;
- b. whether political surgeries are regarded as a permitted community use;
- c. whether permission is required;
- d. who has authority to grant or refuse such

permission;

e. whether any conditions apply to councillors holding surgeries;

f. whether those conditions are intended to apply equally irrespective of political party; and

g. whether the Council has issued any guidance to the organisation concerning access by elected representatives.

5. Previous councillor surgeries

As above.

Please provide any recorded information held by Wigan Council concerning councillors holding surgeries at Platt Bridge Community Zone from 1 January 2013 to the present date.

This should include, where held:

a. dates or frequency of surgeries;

b. the identity of the political group or party represented by the councillor;

c. correspondence concerning arrangements for such surgeries;

d. agreements or permissions concerning use of the premises; and

e. any complaints, objections or disputes concerning councillor surgeries.

I am not seeking personal information about members of the public attending surgeries.

Personal information may therefore be redacted where necessary.

6. Current refusal of access

As above.

Please provide any correspondence, emails, meeting notes, reports or other recorded information held by Wigan Council concerning any request by an elected councillor to hold surgeries at Platt Bridge Community Zone which has been refused, restricted or otherwise declined.

This should include communications between:

a. Wigan Council and Wigan and Leigh Community Charity;

b. Council officers and councillors;

c. Council officers and elected members; and

d. any other party acting on behalf of the Council

in relation to this matter.

Please include any recorded reason given for refusing or restricting such access.

7. Political neutrality and equality of access

[As above.](#)

Please provide any recorded policy, guidance, legal advice, correspondence, assessment or other documentation held by Wigan Council concerning whether community facilities operated with Council funding or under Council ownership or lease arrangements should provide equal access to elected representatives irrespective of their political party or political opinion.

This includes any consideration of:

- a. Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- b. Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- c. section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998;
- d. the Equality Act 2010;
- e. political neutrality; or
- f. equal access by elected representatives to community facilities.

I am seeking recorded information rather than asking the Council to create a new legal opinion.

8. Public authority / public function

[As above.](#)

Please provide any recorded legal advice, legal opinion, internal guidance, correspondence or assessment held by the Council concerning whether Abram Ward Community Co-operative Limited, Abram Ward Community Charity or Wigan and Leigh Community Charity has, or has previously had, functions which the Council considers to be functions of a public nature. This should include any consideration of the organisation's:

- a. occupation or use of Council owned property;
- b. receipt of Council funding;
- c. delivery of services or facilities for local residents;
- d. delivery of services under Council funded

programmes; and

e. contractual obligations under the lease, Service Level Agreement or grant arrangements.

9. Council oversight and enforcement

[As above.](#)

Please provide any recorded information concerning the Council's powers, procedures or intended approach to dealing with an alleged breach by the organisation of:

- a. the lease;
- b. the Permitted User;
- c. the Outcomes;
- d. the Grant Award;
- e. the Service Level Agreement; or
- f. any conditions attached to Council funding.

Please include any enforcement guidance, correspondence or recorded legal advice concerning the circumstances in which the Council could require the organisation to remedy a breach or take other action under the lease.

10. Funding and political access

[As above](#)

Finally, please provide any recorded correspondence or other information which considers whether the receipt of Council funding, occupation of Council owned premises or delivery of Council funded community services has any bearing upon the organisation's ability to restrict access to the premises on the basis of a person's political party or political opinion.