

Appendix A: Freedom of Information Charging Policy

Although this section does not form part of The Publication Scheme, it provides useful information of charges made by the Authority under The Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Authority is entitled to refuse to answer a request on the grounds of cost if it would amount to more than £450 to do so. This is equivalent to about two and half days of work (or 18 hours at the rate of £25 per hour of each officer's search time as prescribed in the Regulations).

When calculating whether answering a request would exceed this threshold, the Authority will take account of the costs involved in the following activities:

- Determining whether it holds the information.
- Locating and retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information; and
- Extracting the information from document(s) containing it (including editing).

In applying fees and charges the Authority can take account of neither the costs of considering whether information is exempt under the Act nor possible expenses incurred in the issuing of Fee Notices.

If a request is estimated to cost less than the prescribed £450 limit, and there is no other basis on which it may be refused or otherwise dealt with, the Authority will answer the request.

- The maximum fee that can be charged in these cases is limited to the specified costs of postage, printing and photocopying, referred to as 'disbursement costs', i.e. the costs of:
- Informing the applicant whether the Authority holds the information
- Reproducing any document containing the information; and
- Communicating the information to the applicant.

An estimate of the level of these 'disbursement' costs is indicated below (plus postage at standard Royal Mail rates):

Photocopies:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| A4 copies | £1.00 for the first 3 sides thereof - 40p per side thereafter |
| A3 copies | £1.00 each side |
| A2 copies | £3.00 each side. To be copied off site. Available within 3 working days |
| A1/A0 copies | £6.00 each side. To be copied off site. Available within 3 working days |

Fax:

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|-------------------|------------------------|
| To UK and Ireland | £1.00 per printed side |
| To Europe | £1.75 per printed side |

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|----------------------|------------------------|
| To Rest of the World | £2.00 per printed side |
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Print-Outs from a PC:

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| Black and White | 10p per printed side |
| Colour | 50p per printed side |

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|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Photo Quality Paper Prints | £1.00 per printed side |
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Electronic Media:

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| CD-R/DVD Disc | £1.00 |
| Scanning of A4 Paper Records | £1.40 per image |
| Scanning of A3 Paper Records | £2.10 per image |
| E-mail Attachment (if data already in electronic format) | No Charge |

Postage

- Postage and packing At the prevailing Royal Mail rates
- Photographs, maps, plans etc At cost

The Combined Authority, at its own discretion, will determine to waive all costs under £10 in respect of a single request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; however, above this sum full disbursement costs will be charged.

This decision may be reviewed periodically within the terms set out in this policy.

If the Authority chooses to answer a request that will cost more than the £450 threshold, the applicant will be contacted and advised what information will be available below that limit, i.e. it will be discussed with the applicant whether he/she would prefer to modify the request to reduce the cost in terms of officer's time.

If an applicant still wishes to proceed with the original request the maximum fee that may be charged is equivalent to the total estimated costs of:

- Determining whether the Authority holds the information, locating and retrieving the information, and extracting the information from a document containing it (prescribed cost of officers' time); and
- Informing the applicant whether the Authority holds the data and communicating the information to the person making the request (disbursement costs).

If the applicant does not agree with the proposed fee, they can appeal through the Combined Authority's complaints procedure in the first instance.

Consecutive or Campaign Requests:

These are where two or more requests for information are made to the Authority by one person or by different persons who appear to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign.

The rule is that the estimated cost of complying with these requests is deemed to be the total cost of complying with them all, i.e. where the cumulative cost becomes

£450 or over, the Authority could refuse to answer the particular request or charge for officers' time involved in servicing all of the requests. However, for this rule to apply the requests would need to relate to the same or similar information and be received within any period of 60 consecutive working days.

Publication Scheme

Nothing contained within this Policy supersedes or invalidates any charges or fees for the supply of information identified within the Combined Authority's Publication Scheme.

Environmental Information Regulations 2004

The above charges will also apply, where appropriate, to requests made under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 except that the "appropriate limit" of £450 shall not apply. The authority cannot charge an applicant to inspect information "on site" or for providing access to any registers or lists of environmental information.

UK-GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018

Requests for personal information from the Combined Authority, under the Data Protection Act's Subject-Access provisions, remain free-of-charge. The Authority will, however, apply the above charges for costs of postage, printing and photocopying, referred to as 'disbursement costs'.

For certain educational and health records we may charge up to a maximum of £50.

In certain cases, where information is held in an unstructured format, the Authority is entitled to refuse to deal with a request. This applies in certain cases where it will take 2½ days or more to deal with a request.

All charges are payable in advance of your request being processed.