



23 July 2018

Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 - Request for Information - Applicable cost limit exceeded**

Thank you for your email] of 25 June 2018 where you requested information about the number of times the Council Executive (Cabinet), Committee and Sub-committees went into closed session for the financial years 2013/14 to 2017/18.

In terms of your first question, "The number of Council executive, committees and sub committees held in private" during that period it is clear that we will not be able to answer your request without undertaking considerable time-consuming investigation.

1. Section 12(1) of the Act allows the Council to refuse to deal with a request where it estimates that it would exceed the limit of £450 to either comply with the request in its entirety, or confirm or deny whether the requested information is held. The estimate must be reasonable in the circumstances of the case.
2. The Council can charge a maximum of £25 per hour to undertake work to comply with a request. This provides an effective time limit of 18 hours.
3. In order to provide you with the information on the scale that you have requested would require somebody to examine the individual records of 5 years' worth of the varied minutes of different meetings, somewhere in the region of 500 sets of minutes.
4. The Council has estimated a cost of £1,040 (41.66 hours) to determine the appropriate material and locate, retrieve and extract the information. Therefore, as complying with your request would exceed 18 hours, or £450, section 12(1) provides that the Council may refuse your request.
5. You may wish to refine your request by narrowing its scope by being more specific about what information you particularly wish to obtain, including any dates or period of time relevant to the information required. Alternatively the Council does publish all sets of minutes on its web site and you will be able to access this information by visiting [www.dartford.gov.uk](http://www.dartford.gov.uk).

In terms of your second question "The number of successful applications to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to hold a meeting of the Council executive, a committee or sub-committee in private without providing 28 days' notice" the answer is zero.



In terms of your third question “The number of times journalists or members of the public have been asked to leave Council executive, committee and sub-committee meetings” we do not hold this information. We do not record whether or not the public are present and on most occasions where exempt information is on the agenda there are no members of the public or journalists present but it is sometimes necessary to resolve to go into closed session if there needs to be detailed discussion of exempt information.

6. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, addressed to Marie Kelly-Stone Head of Legal Services [marie.kelly-stone@dartford.gov.uk](mailto:marie.kelly-stone@dartford.gov.uk)

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

7. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Alan Twyman'.

Alan Twyman  
Democratic Services Manager