



1 September 2017

Dear ,

ATISN 11445: INTERNAL REVIEW IN RESPECT OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

You submitted a request on 1 August 2017 for the following information.

- Please in the case of the City and County of Swansea (CCS) Council Tax base and CT1 return to show the actual amount for Audit Year 2016/2017, i.e. at 31/10/16 there were 2904 exempt Class N properties in CCS.
- Please disclose the entirety of the CT1 form for this relevant Year 1/4/16-31/3/17.
- Please Disclose the Calculation used to determine the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for CCS for each exemption class.
- Please disclose the RSG adjustment for CCS solely due to the Class N exemptions – [2904 properties] for the 16/17 year – in cash terms which forms part of the RSG for CCS. Date period; 1/4/16-31/3/17.

Our initial response on 7 August 2017 provided details of where you could find comprehensive information on the Welsh Government's website about how the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) is calculated. It also provided a link to detailed statistics which included all the verified figures from the CT1 return for 2016-17 received from the City and County of Swansea.

On 9 August 2017, a further email from us explained how the council tax-base is taken into account in calculating RSG and provided clarification as to why there is no data available in response to your request for information on the RSG adjustment made in respect of dwellings which are exempt from council tax, including Class N dwellings.

I have carried out a review of the process which was followed by officials and of the associated documentation. I note that the initial response did not make it as clear as it could have that some of the data you requested does not exist. This aspect of your request therefore was not exempt under s21 of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 (Information accessible to applicant by other means) and the reply should have instead made it clear that the information does not exist.

However, I am satisfied that our replies did provide you with a comprehensive answer and with access to all the relevant information that the Welsh Government holds.

I note that the link to the Statswales website which was included in the initial response enabled you to access comprehensive information from the CT1 return for the Swansea local authority area. For the avoidance of doubt, and to confirm that the relevant information is publicly available, a copy of a full set of CT1 data for Swansea is enclosed with this letter.

I note that in your further email of 10 August, you provided clarification of your request.

“If [the] 2904 [Class N] properties are included in the CT base, how much is this "worth" in extra RSG - if they were all Band D equivalents.....Can you generate the actual value of RSG calculated for Swansea”.

Under the FOI Act, we are required to consider releasing information which is in existence at the time a request for information is received. We are not obliged to generate new information. This is the case in relation to this request, as it would involve undertaking analytical work to perform an alternative calculation of the RSG. Any change to the RSG distribution formula would involve running a series of complex models on a different basis to the way which they currently operate. It would also require a number of judgements to be made about the detailed adjustments which would need to be applied to the formula and which would not be in line with the principles underpinning the formula.

You may wish to note however that, all other things being equal, an increase in the council tax-base used in the formula for a particular authority would lead to a reduction in the RSG for that authority rather than an increase.

If you remain dissatisfied with this response, you have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 745
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk

Also, if you think that there has been maladministration in dealing with your request, you have the option to make a complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales who can be contacted at:

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
Bridgend
CF35 5LJ
Telephone: 0845 6010987 (local rate)
Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Rob Hay
Deputy Director Local Government Finance Policy