

XXX
XXX
XXX

Via e-mail: XXX

Dear XXX,

Freedom of Information Request F0008599

XXX
XXX
Department for Transport
Zone 3/31
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR

DIRECT LINE: 0207 944 XXX
GTN No: 3533 XXX

XXX@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web Site: www.dft.gov.uk

Our Ref: F0008599

16 March 2012

Thank you for your information request of 3 February 2012. Please accept my apologies for the delay in replying. You requested the following information:

“ the amount paid by your department by way of business rates in relation to your authority’s own vacant property/accommodation for 2007/8, 2008/9, 2009/10, 2010/11 and 2011/12. If a forecast figure for empty property rates payments in 2012/13 exists, I would like that as well.”

Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

The Department for Transport was formed in 2002 and is made up of a central department and seven executive agencies as follows:

Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency
Driving Standards Agency
Government Car & Despatch Agency
Highways Agency
Maritime & Coastguard Agency
Vehicle & Operator Services Agency
Vehicle Certification Agency

The Department for Transport aims to hold only Core property (i.e. which is needed for the delivery of its business). All Non-Core property (unless it is held pending transport scheme use) will be disposed or re-allocated at the earliest opportunity in a way which is both consistent with official guidance and achieves value for money.

A response covering both the central department and our executive agencies, is attached at Annex A.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. A copy of this response and the information provided may now be published on our website together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context.

If you are unhappy with the way the Department has handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request you may complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter by writing to the Department’s Information Rights Unit at:

Zone D/01
Ashdown House
Sedlescombe Road North
Hastings
East Sussex TN37 7GA
E-mail: FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Please see attached details of DfT's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact XXX. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely,

XXX

Your right to complain to DfT and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested. In addition a complaint can be made that DfT has not complied with its FOI publication scheme.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

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

Annex A

Organisational Unit	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13 Estimate
DfT Central:	£14,356	£17,250	£16,206	£0	£0	£0
- Headquarters buildings	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
- Air Accidents Investigation Branch	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
- Marine Accident Investigation Branch	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
- Rail Accident Investigation Branch	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Driving Standards Agency	see note	see note	see note	£10,393 (from June 2010)	£11,850 (to 31 January 2012)	see note
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	£6,640	£6,374	£36,981	£69,489	£114,063	£155,879
Government Car and Despatch Agency	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Highways Agency	£2,300	£2,300	£22,460	£98,118	£102,621	£107,752
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Vehicle Certification Agency	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	£0	£0	£0	£0	£2,165	£86,694

Notes:

The requested data is not held centrally and could only be obtained following a manual review of invoices. We have estimated that the cost of complying with your request would exceed £600. Section 12 of the Act (the full text of which is attached at Annex B) does not oblige the Department to comply with requests that exceed this limit, and we are therefore refusing this part of your request.

Section 12 exemption:

Exemption where cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit

(1) Section 1(1) does not oblige a public authority to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying with the request would exceed the appropriate limit.

(2) Subsection (1) does not exempt the public authority from its obligation to comply with paragraph (a) of section 1(1) unless the estimated cost of complying with that paragraph alone would exceed the appropriate limit.

(3) In subsections (1) and (2) “the appropriate limit” means such amount as may be prescribed, and different amounts may be prescribed in relation to different cases.

(4) The Secretary of State may by regulations provide that, in such circumstances as may be prescribed, where two or more requests for information are made to a public authority—

(a) by one person, or

(b) by different persons who appear to the public authority to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign,

the estimated cost of complying with any of the requests is to be taken to be the estimated total cost of complying with all of them.

(5) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for the purposes of this section as to the costs to be estimated and as to the manner in which they are to be estimated.