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Request for comment - Council expenses on homeless accommodations

Dror Kessler <dror.kessler@gmail.com>

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To: Lauren Rainbow <Lauren.Rainbow@birmingham.gov.uk>

[REDACTED]

Hi Lauren

Thank you for getting back to me. I appreciate your help in moving this forward.

In terms of publishing, the story is being discussed with Birmingham Live/Mail, and may run elsewhere as well, as it has multiple parts.

As I wrote, the investigation is centered around data the council is already providing through <https://data.birmingham.gov.uk/> in the form of "over £500 expenses" and "purchase card" monthly files. Any figures or findings mentioned in the questions below refer to the 10/2019 - 9/2020 period. These will be updated to the ones available at publication.

Some acronyms used in the questions:

- **OVR500**: expenses on the "over £500" files, for any purpose
- **ICCP**: expenses on the "individual credit card purchases" files, for any purpose
- **HLESS**: expenses for Homeless Accommodation, of any type

I would be happy to receive comments and/or clarifications regarding the following:

General Accounting:

1. Are ICCP expenses included, in some way, partial or complete, in the OVR500 report?
2. Are expenses in ICCP budgeted using the same controls and procedures as those in OVR500?
3. ICCP files include 583 individual transactions of £3,000 each. What is the nature of these expenses and why are they being billed this way?
4. What is the nature of HLESS refunds on ICCP?
5. What are the determining factors in HLESS expenses being channeled through ICCP vs. OVER500? Is this simply because they are physically paid by a credit card?
6. What is the criteria for an expense to be included in the OVR500 files? Is the payment method (credit card, etc) part of that criteria?
7. Your comment as to HLESS expenses (in OVER5 + ICCP) generally dropping over the said period.
8. Your comment as to HLESS expenses making about half of all expenses in ICCP.

I understand that these are rather technical questions. Still, this is the nature of the issue at hand.

Looking forward to your response or any additional questions you or council staff have.

Kind regards,

Dror Kessler
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