



19 September 2018

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – 1162/18

Dear Sir/Madam

Your request for information has now been considered and the information requested is provided below.

Request/Response:

I am requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act.

This request concerns various financial and expenditure data. The council's first instinct may be to refer me to published reports, such as annual budgets and revenue monitoring reports. However, the council should be aware that such reports are highly likely to be misinterpreted by those without an accountancy background - for example, understanding which, if any, line on an outturn statement counts as the overall outturn excluding DSG and prior to non-budgeted drawdown from general reserves (as per question 11) is likely to lead to misinterpretation. Simply redirecting to published council reports carries a significant risk of the council's actual financial position being misunderstood and misrepresented. Hence it is better for the council to provide the requested information.

High Needs Block

1. The monetary value of the council's High Needs Block allocation from the government each financial year for 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19.

Question 1 excludes any transfer of funds by the council from other parts of the DSG into the High Needs Block (or vice versa).

The forecast 2018/19 figures for the following questions 2-5 should be those forecast at the start of the financial year (e.g. as part of annual budget-setting), not forecasts produced by in-year revenue monitoring.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

2. The monetary value of the council's actual High Needs Block expenditure each financial year for 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and forecast for 2018/19.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

3. The monetary value of the council's overspend or underspend (please specify) on its High Needs Block each financial year for 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and forecast for 2018/19.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

4. The monetary value of transfers (a) to the council's High Needs expenditure from other parts of the council's DSG allocation, and (b) from the council's High Needs Block allocation to other parts of the council's DSG expenditure, each year for 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and forecast for 2018/19.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

5. The monetary value of the council's remaining schools reserve at the end of each financial year for 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and forecast for 2018/19. Please specify when a provided figure represents the schools reserve in deficit.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

6. Any proposals the council has adopted or is considering adopting to reduce (or limit increases in) its High Needs expenditure in 2017/18 or 2018/19, including (but not limited to) mitigating action to tackle forecast High Needs Block overspends in 2018/19, or changes to eligibility for or provision or staffing of special needs education, or restrictions to eligibility for or provision of special needs education transport services.

Answer: Rutland County Council meets regularly with school leaders to review processes and procedures for supporting pupils and how best to ensure that the best use of limited resources is achieved. Reviewing options for spending Capital Grant Funding to help reduce costs of placements out of county by increasing capacity within county.

Reserves

7. The monetary value of the council's remaining unallocated financial reserves (excluding schools reserves) at the end of each financial year for 2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

8. The combined monetary value of the council's remaining allocated financial reserves (excluding schools reserves) at the end of each financial year for 2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18.

The figures for the following questions 9 and 10 should factor in planned savings on council expenditure - i.e. they should not simply forecast a reduction in reserves equivalent to the predicted gap between income and expenditure before the effect of planned savings.

As for questions 2-5, the forecasts in questions 9 and 10 should be those made as part of the council's annual budget setting and/or medium term financial plan, rather than a reflection of 2018/19 in-year revenue monitoring.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

9. The forecast monetary value (if such forecasts exist) of the council's remaining unallocated financial reserves (excluding schools reserves) at the end of each financial year for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

10. The forecast combined monetary value (if such forecasts exist) of the council's remaining allocated financial reserves (excluding schools reserves) at the end of each financial year for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

Outturn

11. The monetary value of the council's final outturn position (excluding DSG) each financial year for 2015/16, 2016/17, and 2017/18 (i.e overspend, underspend or balanced spend - plus monetary value). The figures provided should show each year's outturn *prior to drawdowns from reserves that were not included in the planned annual budget* - in other words, not simply a balanced budget position because the council raided its reserves at the last minute.

Answer: See attached "1162 18 - SEND and reserves FOI spreadsheet".

12. Please list the budgeted savings measures that did not achieve their savings target in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18, categorised by directorate - for each savings measure, please state the budgeted savings target and the actual saving achieved that year.

Answer: 2015/16 – all savings achieved

2016/17 – all savings achieved

2017/18 – all savings achieved (except for a Corporate Headcount saving of £121k – there were underspends on staff budgets during the financial year in excess of the £121k savings target, however none of these underspend were identified as permanent savings. This savings target has now been removed from the budget).

Rutland County Council will, on the whole, only put in the budget savings that are expected to be delivered.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request please contact the Data Protection Officer, Rutland County Council, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland LE15 6HP
You can also complain to the Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House, Water lane
Wilmslow, Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545700

Yours faithfully

FOI Administrator
Business Support Team
Rutland County Council