

FOI Reference Number: FOI/351/1920

Date: 21 January 2020

Request:

1. A copy of the 2018-19 Report to those Charged with Governance.
2. If it is not possible to disclose the whole document, please disclose all sections relating to:
 - an examination of the council's new policy on attending gala dinners and other events, and;
 - the council paying for a table at a constituency dinner of DUP MP Ian Paisley.
3. A copy of the Annual Audit Letter for 2018-19. I understand this is due to be sent to the council before Christmas, and thus I would request that it is included with this FOI response if it has not been already published by the council by the time this response falls due.
4. A copy of the draft Annual Audit Letter for 2018-19 which was circulated within the council on December 5 and discussed at the council's audit committee on December 10.

Response:

Thank you for your information request which Mid and East Antrim Borough Council received on 18 December 2019. Please find below, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's response in relation to your request.

1. A copy of the 2018-19 Report to those Charged with Governance.

Please note, we have been unable to provide the report in its entirety due to Section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 41 states – (1) Information is exempt information if –

(a) it was obtained by the public authority from any other person (including another public authority), and,

(b) the disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person.

2. If it is not possible to disclose the whole document, please disclose all sections relating to:

- an examination of the council's new policy on attending gala dinners and other events, and;
- the council paying for a table at a constituency dinner of DUP MP Ian Paisley.

Recommendation	Status
<p>1 North Antrim Business and Community Dinner (28 September 2017)</p> <p>If an event is to be approved by Councillors then it is important that the most accurate and up to date information is provided including costs.</p> <p>If the information later changes (as it did in this case from a seminar /discussion to a dinner) then Councillors should, where possible, be notified of the change so they have the chance to amend their decision.</p> <p>-The Council should consider amending its policy on attendance at Gala dinner and events to clarify the position on attending this type of business event, especially where the event is perceived as having a particular networking benefit;</p> <p>-Before agreeing to attend future events, the possibility that costs may include an element of political funding should be considered.</p>	<p>This has been actioned in the year. The 'Elected Member and Officer Attendance at events – Guidelines' document was reviewed and presented in February 2019. The checklist that accompanies the guidelines includes a section that considers the political impact of any funding.</p>

3. A copy of the Annual Audit Letter for 2018-19. I understand this is due to be sent to the council before Christmas, and thus I would request that it is included with this FOI response if it has not been already published by the council by the time this response falls due.

Annual Audit Letter for 2018/19 is publically available at https://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/downloads/Mid_and_East_Antrim_Annual_Audit_Letter_Year_ended_31_March_2019.pdf

4. A copy of the draft Annual Audit Letter for 2018-19 which was circulated within the council on December 5 and discussed at the council's audit committee on December 10.

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If you are dissatisfied with the handling of part of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to the Chief Executive at the Braid Ballymena Town Hall, 1-29 Bridge Street, Ballymena, BT43 5EJ.

Please remember to quote the reference number FOI/351/1920 in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of an 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.**

Please be advised that Mid and East Antrim Borough Council may release the response to this information request into the public domain via our website at <https://www.midandeantrim.gov.uk/>.

If we publish our response to your request, your personal data will be removed to protect your privacy.