



**Information Governance**  
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Please contact Information Governance  
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Dear

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**  
**Request ID: REQ07323**

Thank you for your request for information relating to Council officials visiting China.

Your request and our responses are outlined below:

**From 1 January 2017 to the day of your response to this request, please provide information on the number of trips to China taken by council officials (both elected and unelected) in the course of conducting council business.**

**For each trip, please provide the following information:**

- The date and duration of the overseas trip, as well as the Chinese city that was visited.
- The full name, title and position of the council officials who went on the overseas trip as well as the number of people who travelled.
- The reason or reasons why the council officials went on the trip and an explanation as to how the trip benefited the council.
- A list of places the officials visited and the people they met (please provide as much detail as possible)
- The cost of the trip (please provide a breakdown of costs including travel costs, accommodation costs, expenses and any other costs).
- Please state whether the council met the costs of the trip, or whether an individual, group, company, consortium, charity or another organisation met the costs, including Chinese companies or government bodies.
- Please provide the full name of the individual, group, company, charity or organisation that met the costs. If it is a group or consortium, please state who or what composes the group or consortium.
- A copy of the itinerary for each trip.

In response to the questions above, we can advise that the majority of the information requested is included within the travel approvals and report backs we publish when undertaking these visits.

The links are accessible to you via the Council's website at the following links:

China Travel Approval 2018 –

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=724&MId=11696&Ver=4>

China Report Back 2018 –

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=570&MId=12068&Ver=4>

China/Hong Kong Travel Approval 2019 –

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=124&MId=11945&Ver=4>

We therefore do not have to provide this part of the requested information as per Section 21 of the FOIA

With regards to additional details on the 2019 visit, we can confirm that the Authority holds the information you are seeking, however Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act allows us to not disclose it at this point in time as the information is intended for publication at a future date.

The exemption at S43(2) is qualified, and therefore subject to a public interest test. Even where a qualified exemption is engaged it can only be applied where the public interest in withholding information outweighs that in favour of releasing it. In applying the public interest test the Council have given careful consideration to the arguments for and against disclosure.

Disclosure of the information will promote accountability and transparency for the Council's decisions and in its spending of public money. It will assist the public to understand and challenge our decisions or to enable the public to better scrutinise the public monies spent.

However, the Council are unable to share the additional details until it has gone through political scrutiny. Publication processes are also in place to ensure information is published in the ethos of openness and transparency. Therefore, to disclose the 2019 information under the FOIA would pre-empt this process.

Having considered the public interest, we have decided not to release the information. We anticipate the public report being published mid-September in line with the next available meeting of the relevant Scrutiny Board.

- **Details of any gifts received by the officials, their value and which organisation, individual gave them gift.**
- **Details of any financial benefits received by the council as a result of the trip -**

**e.g. free office space in China.**

We can confirm that no gifts or financial benefits were received by officials or by the Council as a result of the trips.

The supply of information in response to a freedom of information request does not confer an automatic right to re-use the information. You can use any information supplied for the purposes of private study and non-commercial research without requiring further permission. Similarly, information supplied can also be re-used for the purposes of news reporting. An exception to this is photographs. Please contact us if you wish to use the information for any other purpose.

Should you wish to make any further requests for information, you may find what you are looking for is already published on the [Council's web site](#) and in particular its FOI/EIR [Disclosure log](#), [Council's Publication Scheme](#), [Open Data](#) and [Facts about Coventry](#).

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request, you can ask us to review our response. Requests for reviews should be submitted within 40 days of the date of receipt of our response to your original request – email: [infogov@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@coventry.gov.uk)

If you are unhappy with the outcome of our review, you can write to the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or email [casework@ico.org.uk](mailto:casework@ico.org.uk).

Please remember to quote the reference number above in your response.

Yours faithfully

**Information Governance**