Dear

Freedom of Information Response (Our Ref: K/20/455)

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request dated 5 November 2020, reference K/20/455. Please accept our sincere apologies for the delay in providing a response.

Your request read:

“What has your annual budget been for website development for the past 3 financial years?
What internal human resource do you have (role titles and where they sit in the institution) that lead, or significantly contribute to, the technical development and maintenance of the website. Please also identify if these are permanent or fixed term roles and what pay scale or grade they are on.
How many content editors do you have contributing to the website?
What additional spend or investment has taken place over the last 3 financial years in website-related projects, and what services/platforms/products has this been spent on? This might be for specific development projects, content projects or new platforms to support delivery such as personalisation or data collection tools.
What CMS are you using for your main website and what is the annual cost of this? If there are several, please identify them, and broadly where they sit.
What site search platform do you use and what is the annual cost of this service?”

The University of Leeds holds some information relevant to your request. However, we consider that to respond to your request would exceed the cost limit as set out in Section 12(1) of the FOI Act. Section 12(1) states that a public authority can refuse a request if complying with it would exceed the appropriate limit of £450. For the purposes of FOI, time spent on the permitted activities is calculated at the flat rate of £25 per person, per hour. The appropriate limit therefore represents the estimated cost of one person spending 18 hours to determine whether the information is held, and to locate, retrieve and extract the information.

We have outlined the reasons for invoking Section 12(1) below.

Your fourth question seeks the value of “additional spend or investment…over the last three financial years in website-related projects” and the services/platforms/products this money has been spent on. This is a very broad question, and we consider that many projects, services and products may fall within the scope of this part of your request. It is possible (and feasible) that any School, Faculty or department across the University could have incurred costs which can be considered to be associated with “website-related projects”. As such, the only means
by which we could locate any information relevant to this part of your request would be to ask all teams and departments to review their spend for the previous three financial years. We estimate that this would take several hours per team, not least because any spend which is “website-related” would to be located and then examined in detail in order to isolate the information you have requested (or discount the spend if it transpires that it is not, in fact, relevant). We do not consider there to be any more expeditious means by which we could locate information relevant to your request, because spend may be ‘website-related’ without this being immediately apparent based on the invoice, cost-code or other financial record. For instance, spend on legal advice in relation to the data-protection implications of an interactive webpage would fall within the scope of your request, but may be coded as ‘legal advice’ or simply coded to the department which incurred the cost. As such, neither invoices nor cost codes information would demonstrate the nature of the project to which the spend relates.

It is not possible for us to provide a specific estimate of how long it would take to locate information relevant to your request. However, based on the number of teams that would need to review information they hold, and that only a manual review is possible, we are satisfied that this would take significantly longer than the 18-hour appropriate limit set out at section 12(1) of the FOI Act.

We would be able to provide a response to your remaining questions within the appropriate limit, should you wish. Alternatively, if you specifically require information in relation to question four, we consider that the most efficient way to refine your request is likely to be via simplifying your question so that it seeks any spend by one specific team as this will remove the need to track invoices and try to establish whether particular spend is associated with “website-related projects”.

If refining your request in this way would not be suitable, we would ask that you provide a specific definition of “website-related projects”. We advise that you make this as targeted as possible, to ensure that the time which we need to spend on locating information is focused on the information which is most relevant to your aims. Furthermore, we suggest that you reduce the timeframe of your request (ideally to one financial year or less) and limit the scope to one team or department. Furthermore, we suggest that you reduce the timeframe of your request (ideally to one financial year or less) and limit the scope to one team or department.

We hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions about this email, however, please do not hesitate to contact us on foi@leeds.ac.uk

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, you can request an Internal Review. Requests for Internal Review should be made in writing using the following contact information:

Post: Mr D Wardle
Deputy Secretary
The University of Leeds
Leeds
LS2 9JT
Email: foi@leeds.ac.uk

Requests for Internal Review should be submitted within 40 working days of receiving the University’s response to your request. Further information about how the University manages Freedom of Information requests and about our complaints procedure is also available on our website (www.leeds.ac.uk).

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. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review/complaints procedure provided by the University. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner’s Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

Yours sincerely

Chloe Wilkins
Freedom of Information Officer

Secretariat
University of Leeds