



**Information Governance Team**

Postal Address:  
Coventry City Council  
PO Box 15  
Council House  
Coventry  
CV1 5RR

[www.coventry.gov.uk](http://www.coventry.gov.uk)

E-mail: [infogov@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:infogov@coventry.gov.uk)

Phone: 024 7697 5408

13 October 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)**

**Request ID: FOI545064430**

Thank you for your request for information relating to Council investments.

You have requested the following information:

**This is an information request relating to commercial investments taken by the council since 2019, Please include the following information:**

- **A list of all commercial investments taken by the council during the 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22, 2022/23 and current financial years**
- **The value of each investment**
- **The future annual income forecast at the time of purchase**
- **The actual income received each year since the purchase, up until and including the 2022/23 financial year**

**Clarification: By commercial investment I mean a for-profit enterprise with the expectation of generating cash flow. Commercial property would be an example of this.**

**Value of Each Investment**

<b>Investment</b>	<b>Value £m</b>	<b>Year</b>
Tom White Waste	14.637	2019/2020
Sherbourne Recycling (21.5% shareholding)	0.215	2020/2021

Oak House, Eastwood Business Village	1.788	2020/2021
B&M, Ansty Road	5.000	2019/2020

### **Future Annual Income Forecast at time of Purchase**

Regarding the future annual income forecast at time of purchase, it is confirmed that the Council does hold information pursuant to your request. However, it is our view that the information is exempt from disclosure under Section 43(2) – Commercially Sensitive Information. Section 43(2) exempts information from disclosure where disclosure of that information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity).

It is the Council's position that the third-party providers and its own commercial interests would be prejudiced and/or would be likely to be prejudiced by the disclosure of the requested information.

Once the information is disclosed this means that it will be in the public domain and it could not only be used by the requester but also any other providers in a similar market.

Arguments in favour of disclosure.

- Promote accountability and transparency for the Council's decisions and in its spending of public money.
- Assist the public to understand and challenge our decisions.
- Inform the public of the activities carried out on their behalf, allowing for more user involvement and collaborative decision making.
- Enable the public to better scrutinise the public monies spent

Arguments against disclosure.

- There is a public interest in allowing public authorities to withhold information which if disclosed, would reduce providers' ability to compete in a commercial environment.
- The successful providers operate in a competitive market. If prejudicing the commercial interests of the successful providers in the market would distort competition in that market, this would not be in the public interest.
- Disclosure of information may cause unwarranted reputational damage or loss of confidence in the Council.
- Revealing information such as a pricing mechanism can be detrimental to a provider's commercial interest. If an organisation has knowledge of a provider's business model, it can exploit this for its own commercial interest. This would also have a detrimental impact on the Council on other contracts and procurements by distorting the market, for the reasons stated above.

Having considered the arguments for and against disclosure, the Council has decided that the public interest in this case is best served by maintaining the exemption under section 43(2) FOIA and by not disclosing the information requested.

The decision to withhold the information requested is therefore upheld on the basis that Section 43(2) in relation to commercially sensitive information has been applied correctly.

## Income Received each year (Actual Income received by Council)

Income received through dividends for Tom White Waste and Sherbourne.

Investment	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 £m	2022/23
Tom White Waste - Dividends received			0.5	Financial Statements not yet published for this year.
Sherbourne Recycling			Not trading as asset is still under construction	
Oak House, Eastwood Business Village*				
B&M, Ansty Road*				

\*For these investments, please refer to Future Annual Income Forecast at time of Purchase.

The supply of information in response to a FOI/EIR 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.

For information, we publish a variety of information such as: [FOI/EIR Disclosure Log](#), [Publication Scheme](#), [Facts about Coventry](#) and [Open Data](#) that you may find of useful if you are looking for information in the future.

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 [icocasework@ico.org.uk](mailto:icocasework@ico.org.uk).

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

Yours faithfully

**Information Governance**