

Thank you for your e-mail of 19 May 2011 in which you asked to be provided with the following information:

- 1) what the total projected cost for flying flags outside Eland House, Bressenden Place is for the next 12 months, with particular reference to flying flags of different counties;
- 2) what the total expenditure has been so far for flying flags outside Eland House, since 6 May 2010;
- 3) how many English council leaders the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government has met with in person since 6 May 2010;
- 4) which English council leaders the Secretary of State has met with in person since 6 May 2010; and
- 5) how many requests for meetings the Secretary of State has received from English council leaders since 6 May 2010.

Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

I can confirm that the Department holds information falling within the terms of your request and is able to provide you with that information.

The anticipated cost of flying flags outside Eland House in the next 12 months is zero.

All recent county flags have been loaned to the Department by the Association of British Counties or the relevant county council. The Department expects this to continue to be the case until August this year when all county flags will have been flown.

The Association of British Counties or the relevant county council provide the flags free of charge to the Department, including the cost of posting the flag. The Department does not hold information on their postage costs incurred. The return postage is covered by the Department's postage budget, but for which a breakdown is not available.

This excludes the flags for Bedfordshire and Cheshire – flown early on in the process – which were not available from either source at the time and so were purchased by the Department at a total cost of £12.57.

Information about how many and which English council leaders the Secretary of State has met with has been published and can be found in the FOI Disclosure Log on the Department's web-site at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/foi/disclosure-log/disclosurelog2011/jun2011/visits>

I am afraid the Department is, however, unable to provide you with the information you have asked for about how many *requests* for meetings the Secretary of State has received from English council leaders. By virtue of section 12(1) of the FOI Act the Department is not obliged to comply with a request for information where the cost of determining whether information is held and locating, retrieving and extracting it would exceed the appropriate limit, which is set in FOI Fees Regulations at £600 for central government departments. The information you have requested is not held centrally and potentially therefore would require enquiries to be made and a search of records carried out across the Department in order to identify relevant information. For this reason we take the view that the appropriate limit would be exceeded in this case. However, if there is a way in which you would like to refine this part of your request then please let me know and we would be able to consider whether it is possible to provide you with further information within the appropriate limit.