

Since October 2010 to the present day, the Department has not spent any money on trees or potted plants. Under the previous administration, the Department spent almost £7,000 a year on internal planting within its offices until that contract was terminated by the present administration in September 2010. The plants are now maintained by staff volunteers at no cost to the department following a staff suggestion made in response to an invitation from Ministers to suggest ideas on how to operate even more efficiently. The Department does not hold information relating to the number of individual plants within its offices

In addition, The Planning Inspectorate, an executive agency of the Department, spent £17,279 a year on plant maintenance, from 1 January 2009 to October 2010. Similarly this contract was cancelled by the incoming administration in October 2010.

The Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre (QEII CC), another executive agency of the Department, has also provided the following response to your information request:

- 1) *£20,000 per annum. (contracted maintenance)*
- 2) *60 potted plants and 24 glass vases with growing orchids*
- 3) *Martin Litherland, Event Operations Manager. QEII Conference Centre*
- 4) *Open-ended contract (3-month termination clause)*

The QEII CC operates as a commercial conference centre and is self-funding; the above expenditure is therefore not funded by grant or grant-in-aid from the public purse. The Conference Centre provides commercial room hire services and conference facilities to the private sector, and the plants directly relate to the service it offers.