



Office of the  
Deputy Prime Minister

Creating sustainable communities

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Dear

**Demand for Information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000**

Thank you for your letter of 12 July 2005. It has been forwarded to me for reply.

ODPM was formed on the 29 May 2002 and there is no record of any expenditure authorised by ODPM or the Government Offices to either The Foreign Policy Centre or the Demos Think Tank since then. With respect to Common Purpose, ODPM (Central Units) have incurred a total expenditure of £3,730, all in the 2004/05 financial year. The Regional Co-ordination Unit for the Government Offices has also confirmed that they have incurred expenditure relating to Common Purpose - £54,293.38 in the 2004/05 financial year and £23,406.25, to date, in the current 05/06 financial year.

Common Purpose is a training organisation, with a number of offices throughout the country. The company concentrates on leadership training, with a particular emphasis on the local community. It brings together a diverse, cross-sector group of people, and aims to provide attendees with a wider understanding of the bigger social picture within which they operate. The training offered includes organised tours and induction to the particular locality and local issues, supplemented by seminars and speakers from a mixture of backgrounds. Discussions focus on the issues facing a particular region, for example, crime, education etc. This type of training has proved useful, particularly for members of the Government Offices, both for personal development and for producing enhanced performance of day to day duties.

Whilst Common Purpose do, indeed, mention on their website that discussions are conducted under 'Chatham House Rules', this is not unusual for this type of developmental training. Such training is not intended to encourage 'closed door meetings' since there are no decisions or outcomes at stake for any organisation, apart from individual development.

ODPM, as an organisation, is fully committed to the Government's Open Government agenda and the Freedom of Information Act. ODPM is also committed to ensuring that expenditure it incurs is an efficient and effective use of the public money it is given and secures the best value for money possible.

Yours faithfully,

**Simon Hayes**