



Information Released under Freedom of Information Act

Subject: Enquiry regarding "a publicly accessible register of beneficial owners".

Date Released: 21 January 2014

Summary of request: The enquirer requested information concerning "a publicly accessible register of beneficial owners".

Information released

You have asked the following questions:

- the identity of the Companies House business lead for the project (ie, the senior civil servant responsible)
- the planned launch date for this service
- the current size of the project team
- the number of companies registered in the system (if any)
- the cost of the project to date
- any wireframe designs/mockups/screenshots for the user interface to the prospective system
- any functional design specification and/or 'request for proposal' document associated with the system
- the name of any system integrator/software developer appointed to implement the solution

Unfortunately I am unable to provide answers to the above questions. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skill (BIS) has issued a discussion paper on how a register of beneficial owners might be implemented. The discussion paper sought views on what information this might include and who would be obliged to provide the information. BIS are analysing the responses to that paper and it is hoped that a Government response will be published early this year. Companies House Strategy and Policy Team is only involved in discussions with BIS at this stage. As the consultation is not finalised a policy has yet to be formulated, a project has not been set up within Companies House and activities have not been identified.