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REDACTED

Our ref: FOI2020/11769  
8 June 2020

Dear <sup>REDACTED</sup>

### **REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: ICT Documents**

Thank you for your request for information of 12 May 2020 about ICT documents. We have handled your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your information request and our response are set out below:

1. *ICT/IM&T/IS Strategy- The IT department strategy or plans, highlights their current and future objectives.*

The information you requested is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 22 of the FOIA, which relates to information intended for future publication.

In applying this exemption we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure.

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning government organisations' IT strategies, as this promotes transparency in government and assures the public that money spent on IT services is being used prudently.

On the other hand, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information because we are aiming to publish this document on GOV.UK during autumn 2020. Although we had originally intended to publish the strategy last summer, a change in senior leadership in the department, including a new Permanent Secretary and Chief Digital and Information Officer, plus the delay to EU Exit, meant that the publication of the strategy was delayed. We are currently working to get this document approved internally and we consider that providing information on an ad hoc basis on this issue would not be in the public interest as it would divert valuable resources away from ongoing work being done to get it approved and published



and would require staff to invest additional time into publishing the same information twice.

Therefore, we have concluded that in all the circumstances of the case, the information should be withheld.

2. *ICT Org Chart- A visual document that present the structure of the IT department, please include name and job titles. If this can't be sent please work towards a structure with job titles.*

The information you have requested is not held. We have recently completed a transformation of our IT organisational structure and have not yet updated the final organisation chart to reflect these changes. We are currently reviewing our Target Operating Model and expect this information to be available towards the end of the year. This work has slowed due to the ongoing response to Covid-19.

3. *ICT Annual or Business Plan- Similar to the ICT strategy but is more annually focused.*

Our ICT Business/Departmental Plan is contained within the Defra Departmental Business Plan which can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/department-for-environment-food-and-rural-affairs-single-departmental-plan>

As the information is reasonably accessible to you by other means, section 21 of the FOIA exempts Defra from providing a copy of the information with this response to your request.

4. *ICT Capital Programme/budget- A document that shows financials budget on current and future projects.*

The information you have requested is being withheld under section 43(2) of the FOIA, which relates to information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). In applying exemption 43(2) we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure.

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning details of public sector IT spend, and in particular ICT capital/programme budgets as this helps promote transparency in government and reassurance that public money is being spent prudently.

However there is a strong public interest in withholding the information as it would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial interests of Defra. This is because publishing the full breakdown of budgets would identify specific amounts involved and would

thereby prejudice Defra's commercial interests in future tendering bids. It would not be in the public's interest if there was not a competitive tendering process to enable Defra to seek the best agreements.

Therefore, we have concluded that in all the circumstances of the case, the information should be withheld.

Information disclosed in response to this FOIA request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOIA and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

We attach Annex A, explaining the copyright that applies to the information being released to you, and Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me.

Yours sincerely

REDACTED

**Information Rights Team**  
[InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk)

## **Annex A**

### **Copyright**

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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## **Annex B**

### **Complaints**

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 11 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Andrew Mobsby, Head of Information Rights via email at [InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk](mailto:InformationRequests@defra.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our website.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for a decision. Please note that generally the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure.

The ICO's offices are currently closed so please visit their website on how to contact them during this period, here:

<https://ico.org.uk>