

30 June 2021

Ref: FOI2021/12006

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your enquiry of 9 April 2021, which we have considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

You asked for the following information:

"I'd like to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act for details of communications between Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak and Second Permanent Secretary Charles Roxburgh regarding Greensill Capital and its access to the CCFF and other Covid finance schemes which Greensill applied for last year, including, but not limited, to CLBILS.

Specifically, please provide

- 1. Any text messages exchanged between the two men -- or their offices -- on the matter that mention either Greensill or David Cameron between April 3 and July 31 last year.*
- 2. Any emails exchanged between the two men-- or their offices -- on the matter that mention either Greensill or David Cameron between April 3 and July 31 last year.*
- 3. Minutes of any meetings between the two men in which either Greensill or David Cameron are mentioned between April 3 and July 31 last year.*

As you know there is a lot of attention on this matter, and it is in the public interest to know the extent of the chancellor's involvement in discussions around Greensill's access to the Covid programs."

Following a search of our records, we can confirm that HM Treasury does hold information within the scope of your request. Please find the information requested enclosed with this letter.

We are withholding some of this information under the following exemptions:

Section 35(1)(a) - formulation or development of government policy

Some information in scope is being withheld because it relates to the formulation and development of government policy in respect of the Covid Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) and in respect of the Boardman Review into the use of supply chain finance in government: releasing this information now could undermine the Review's work and the government's ability to consider or develop policy options in response to any recommendations arising from it.

This is a qualified exemption and, as such, we have considered the balance of public interest in disclosure and non-disclosure of the information. We recognise that there is an inherent public interest in transparency and accountability of public authorities, particularly in relation to the use of public funds, and in promoting the understanding of the issues with which public authorities deal. Balanced against this is the public interest in protecting the integrity of the policy-making process and the government's ability to freely discuss policies with complex trade-offs. It is important not to erode the safe space that is needed for effective policy making, particularly in relation to policies for supporting the economic recovery from Covid-19 that are currently being developed. Furthermore, as we have explained there is a risk that the premature and ad hoc release of information that relates to the Boardman Review could undermine the Review's work and the government's ability to consider or develop policy options in response to any recommendations arising from it. Given the serious issues the Review is looking into, it is important that a safe space is maintained for the Review to operate effectively and for the government to formulate and develop a robust policy response. We consider that the balance of the public interest falls to protecting this information given that its release would likely have a detrimental impact on the ongoing formulation and development of policy.

Section 40(2) - third party personal data: Section 40(2) of the FOI Act, by virtue of section 40(3)(a)(i) provides an absolute exemption for third party personal data, where disclosure would contravene any of the data protection principles set out in Article 5 of the UK General Data Protection Regulation. The first data protection principle requires the disclosure of third-party personal data to be lawful, fair and transparent. We believe that releasing the information would breach the first data protection principle, since it would be unlawful and unfair to release the information.

Section 41(1) - information provide in confidence: this exemption provides that information is exempt if disclosure of the information to the public (otherwise than under this Act) by the public authority holding it would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that or any other person. In this case the information was obtained by a third party in confidence. This is an absolute exemption which does not require us to consider the public interest balance in disclosure.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us. Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Unit

Copyright notice

Most documents HM Treasury supplies in response to a Freedom of Information request, including this letter, continue to be protected by Crown copyright. This is because they will have been produced by Government officials as part of their work. You are free to use these documents for your information, for any non-commercial research you may be doing and for news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, will require the permission of the copyright holder. Crown copyright is managed by The National Archives and you can find details on the arrangements for re-using Crown copyright material at: <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/re-using-public-sector-information/uk-government-licensing-framework/crown-copyright/>