



Homes
England

Date: 22 June 2021

Our Ref: RFI3474

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

Making homes happen

██████████
By Email Only

Windsor House
Homes England – 6th Floor
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Dear ██████████

RE: Request for Information – RFI3474

Thank you for your recent email, which was processed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA). You requested the following information:

I would like to request a copy of a letter of support sent by Sir Edward Lister to Marvin Rees about the Bristol Arena for a story I am writing.

This letter was cited in several press interviews by Mr Rees or used to brief journalists in July 2018:

<https://www.building.co.uk/focus/bristols-rejected-arena-a-tale-of-two-cities/5095745.article>

<https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-news/government-body-backs-possibility-moving-1814805>

<https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/features/does-bristol-even-need-an-arena/>

Response

We are able to confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

In order to conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our responsible project team and executive office teams who would have the requested information if held.

The FOIA does not oblige a public authority to create information to answer a request if the requested information is not held. The duty under section 1(1) is only to provide the recorded information held.

The full text of section 1 in the legislation can be found here:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/1>

Advice and Assistance

We have a duty to provide advice and assistance in accordance with Section 16 of the FOIA. To comply with this duty we are able to confirm that whilst we do not hold a 'letter of support' in relation to this matter, we do hold a copy of a press release/media statement given by Sir Edward Lister regarding Bristol Arena in July 2018. This is attached as Annex A.

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Right to Appeal

If you are not happy with the information that has been provided or the way in which your request has been handled, you may request an internal review. You can request an internal review by writing to Homes England via the details below, quoting the reference number at the top of this letter.

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

The Information Governance Team
Homes England – 6th Floor
Windsor House
50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL

Your request for review must be made in writing, explain why you wish to appeal, and be received within 40 working days of the date of this response. Failure to meet this criteria may lead to your request being refused.

Upon receipt, your request for review will be passed to an independent party not involved in your original request. We aim to issue a response within 20 working days.

You may also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) however, the Information Commissioner does usually expect the internal review procedure to be exhausted in the first instance.

The Information Commissioner's details can be found via the following link <https://ico.org.uk/>

Please note that the contents of your request and this response are also subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Homes England may be required to disclose your request and our response accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

The Information Governance Team
For Homes England

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20 July 2018

MEDIA STATEMENT

Bristol Arena debate: Statement from Homes England

Sir Edward Lister, Chairman of Homes England, today said:

“Homes England takes a particular interest in the debate about the future of an arena in Bristol and its potential location at Temple Island. Previously, our interest derived from the fact that we sold the site to the Council in 2015 with the intention of a range of uses being developed on it, including an arena.

“However, times have changed. Homes England is now far more ambitious and we are working with key partners including Bristol City Council, the West of England Combined Authority and Network Rail to bring about real long-term economic growth in Bristol Temple Quarter and across the City and wider region. Today, we see evidence of a commitment to the pace and scale of delivery that is winning the interest of Government and the private sector alike. It is in this context that it is vital that Bristol gives the Mayor and his Cabinet the space and support they need to make the right decision on the future of the arena.

“Bristol is at a pivotal moment where impending decisions will affect the City’s future for generations to come. Decisions made about strategic development opportunities, including the location of the arena, must be made on robust evidence rather than short-term political gains. This will ensure that the City continues to attract investment and remains economically successful.



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“It was right for the Mayor to put the kibosh on previous high-cost proposals for the arena and take stock. The City must be able to afford propositions. The subsequent commissioning of studies to assess actual value for money of building an arena on Temple Island, potential alternative mixed-use proposals and the offer by YTL Developments to locate the arena at Filton was essential to ensure that an informed decision could be made on the City’s future. The studies provide evidence that an alternative mixed-use development instead of an arena on Temple Island would provide an additional £500m into the economy and three times as many jobs. Alongside this, much needed new homes will be delivered under mixed-use proposals. These are big differences that cannot be taken lightly. Furthermore, the future location of the arena needs to be considered alongside the University of Bristol’s recent commitment to deliver a new £300 million campus on Temple Island (for which planning consent has now been achieved) and the significant Bristol Temple Meads station improvements coming forward.

“Homes England supports partners ready to make the right decision in the long-term interests of their cities. Focus, commitment, evidence-based decision making and collaborative working are the qualities we are looking for when we are making a judgement on how confident we are to invest in a place and its leadership. I therefore endorse the approach Mayor Rees and his Cabinet have taken.”

ENDS

Homes England is the new housing delivery organisation that has been created to adopt a more commercial approach to respond to the long term housing challenges facing this country. The new, expanded agency will play a far bigger role in investing in supply and intervening in the market to help deliver 300,000 homes a year by the middle of the next decade. Homes England will act differently from its predecessor, bringing together money, land, expertise and planning and compulsory purchase powers to accelerate the supply of new homes and address affordability issues in areas of highest demand.