



Homes
England

Date: 8 March 2022

Our Ref: RFI3748

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

Making homes happen

██████████
By Email Only

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

Dear ██████████

RE: Request for Information – RFI3748

Thank you for your request for information which was processed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

You requested the following information:

Full copies of all minutes, agendas and briefing materials for the meeting held with the Mayor of Bristol on 08/12/2021. Please also include any other materials that were handed out or received during the meeting, such as presentations, reports, etc..

Response

We can inform you that we do hold some information that falls within the scope of your request. We can confirm that the meeting on 8 December 2021 was an informal, introductory meeting between the Mayor of Bristol and Chief Executive Peter Denton, therefore, there was no agenda and there were no minutes recorded for the meeting.

The only materials held in relation to the meeting was a briefing note which was composed in advance of the meeting held on 8 December. Please find a copy of the briefing note attached as Annex A.

However, we rely on Section 40 (2) and Section 43 (2) of the FOIA to withhold some of the information from disclosure.

Section 40 – Personal information

We have redacted information on the grounds that it constitutes third party personal data and therefore engages section 40(2) of the FOIA.

To disclose personal data, such as names, contact details, addresses, email addresses and personal opinions could lead to the identification of third parties and would breach one or more of the data protection principles.

Section 40 is an absolute exemption which means that we do not need to consider the public interest in disclosure. Once it is established that the information is personal data of a third party and release would breach one or more of the data protection principles, then the exemption is engaged.

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The full text in the legislation can be found on the following link:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/40>

Section 43 - Commercial interests

Under section 43(2) Homes England is not obliged to disclose information that would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any party.

The information requested relating to costs engages section 43(2) of the FOIA as it is commercial in nature and its release would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of Homes England and other interested parties to the information.

Homes England has identified that the information requested, if released, would be likely to prejudice the effective operation of development on the land.

Section 43 is a qualified exemption. This means that once we have decided that the exemption is engaged, Homes England must carry out a public interest test to assess whether or not it is in the wider public interest for the information to be disclosed.

Arguments in favour of disclosure:

- Homes England acknowledges there is a general public interest in promoting accountability, transparency, public understanding and involvement in how Homes England undertakes its work and how it spends public money.

Arguments in favour of withholding:

- Releasing the information could reveal financial information of a third party (the Council) which may in turn affect their commercial interests. The consequences of releasing data that is part of a wider ongoing matter could damage our relationships with partners and put other potential funding allocations at risk. This would not be in the public interest as this could put potential homes in jeopardy and affect Homes England's ability to deliver against its objectives in our strategic plan;
- Disclosure would result in the council's negotiating position being adversely affected. If other potential or confirmed sources of funding became aware of how much funding is likely to be provided and by whom it would be likely to result in Homes England having to pay a higher grant than would have otherwise be the case. This would result in greater cost to the public purse which would not be in the public interest; and
- Homes England has been unable to identify a wider public interest in disclosing the information requested.

Having considered the arguments for and against disclosure of the information, we have concluded that at this time, the balance of the public interest favours non-disclosure.

The full text of the legislation can be found on the following link:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/43>



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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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To: Peter Denton, Chief Executive

From: s. 40(2), Senior
Manager; s. 40(2),
Government Relations Manager

SRO: s. 40(2), Director, Strategic Development

Date: 08 December 2021

Introductory meeting with Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol - 08 December, 12:00-12:30

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. You are meeting Marvin Rees for an introductory call prior to the Bristol Temple Quarter Strategic Board on 10 December 2021.
2. The Mayor of Bristol (biography in **Annex A**) used to meet with the previous Chief Executive on a regular basis and Peter Freeman had an introductory call in December 2020 (the meeting note is provided in **Annex B**).

B. BRISTOL TEMPLE QUARTER - KEY UPDATES

3. It is important for the Bristol Temple Quarter Regeneration Programme (BTQRP) that the four project stakeholders West of England Combined Authority (WECA), Network Rail (NR), Homes England & Bristol City Council (BCC) work collaboratively. This will be vital to deliver new public realm infrastructure, station entrances and up to 2,500 homes with 40% of these as affordable housing.

Funding and Recycling Strategy

4. It is expected BCC, Homes England and NR will recycle land receipts and revenue to fund new flood defence infrastructure and utilities upgrades in St Philip's Marsh (SPM). Network Rail have stated any recycled funds (secured from their site) would need to be reinvested into their assets directly. This will be renegotiated/discussed in the new year and BCC is supportive of this approach.
5. In relation to phase two at SPM, Homes England is considering committing the land receipt from the sale of plot three (circa. ~~£~~43m to be received in s. 43) into the future funding of phase two. Homes England would expect a matched commitment from BCC in relation to the land receipts and revenue derived from its developments located in phase one such as the Legal and General Temple Island site.
6. These sites are considered to benefit from the infrastructure works planned as part of phase one and therefore the associated receipts can aid the future funding of SPM. Homes England have had an initial conversation with BCC regarding this plan.

Recent Project Activity

7. There was a positive workshop on 25 November 2021 with representations from all partners. To drive forward the development at BTQ, workstreams and working groups have been identified and are being established via the Joint Delivery Team.
8. Whilst there is clarity about what needs to be done there is still hesitation from partners in mobilisation and commitment of resources until such a time when funding is approved. This may present a challenge around meeting pre-commencement conditions for the funding before the end of the financial year.
9. In the meantime, Homes England have initiated the procurement of legal advisors and are reviewing the Land Strategy Brief for St Philip's Marsh.

C. POINTS TO CONSIDER AT BRISTOL TEMPLE QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING – 10 DECEMBER 2021

10. The Bristol Temple Quarter board would like a reinforcement of a clear commitment from all partners to deliver St Philip's Marsh in the long-term. This requires upfront commitment of resource, both human and financial to undertake the necessary scoping and strategy work. This early work will help in ensuring the full potential of SPM can be realised.
11. There is a particular workstream relating to the land assembly strategy and this will require participation and commitment from both WECA and BCC. It is very likely that any land assembly will be undertaken with the backdrop of CPO and partners should consider their willingness to support this approach.
12. Alongside the early work on the delivery and assembly strategy for SPM there needs to be a commitment from partners. This includes funding the necessary infrastructure and using resources available to them to complete the work. This will involve using recycled revenue and receipts from phase one but also investment of receipts generated from assets that are considered to have benefitted from phase one government investment.
13. There is a need to progress discussions on the options for delivery vehicles and an appropriate procurement strategy.

D. BRISLINGTON MEADOWS

14. The Brislington Meadows site had first been earmarked for housing in the 2014 Local Plan. In early 2020, with a London property company stalling on a deal with the council, BCC persuaded Homes England to acquire the land to accelerate the delivery of 300 new homes (incl. 90 BCC homes).
15. On this basis Homes England acquired the land for £15m. 13 months later, when we were just about to start consultation on the development, Marvin Rees u-turned and declared that Brislington Meadows site was too important an ecological site to have any homes built on it at all.
16. As a consequence, there are some tensions between Homes England and BCC Mayor that remain unresolved. Homes England intends to progress with a planning application in s. 43 [REDACTED] albeit at risk and have upcoming webinar's (08 December 2021) and drop-in sessions (09 December 2021) as part the community engagement strategy.

ANNEX A: MAYOR OF BRISTOL BIOGRAPHY



17. Marvin Rees was first elected mayor in May 2016, standing for the Labour Party. On his election, Bristol became the first major European city to have elected a mayor of black African heritage. Previously, he worked in international development in the United Kingdom and spent time working in the United States on social justice issues before joining the British Broadcast Corporation Bristol as a Broadcast Journalist.
18. During his first term in office, Marvin Rees oversaw the building of almost 9,000 homes, announced the development of a mass transit system and provided work experiences for over 3,500 children who wouldn't readily have access to such opportunities.

19. Marvin Rees has also achieved accredited Living Wage Employer status for the local authority. He also introduced 'Ban the Box' which meant Bristol City Council was the first local authority to no longer ask applicants to disclose criminal convictions until after a conditional job offer has been made. He also led the successful bid to bring Channel four to Bristol and is leading the city's response to both the climate and ecological emergencies.
20. Working with partners, he coordinated Bristol's response to the coronavirus pandemic and planned the city's recovery. After serving an extended five-year first term due to the coronavirus pandemic, Marvin Rees was re-elected in May 2021. He received 56.6% of the vote in a second-round vote against the candidate from the Green Party.

The role of the Mayor of Bristol

21. The Mayor of Bristol is directly elected by the people of Bristol and leads the council and its councillors, to provide services for the people of Bristol.
22. The Mayor also performs a broader role representing the interests of Bristol's citizens on a national and international level.
23. Elections for the Mayor of Bristol are held every four years.

ANNEX B: SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS MEETING BETWEEN HOMES ENGLAND CHAIR, CEO AND THE MAYOR

24. Attendees

- s. 40(2), Mayor of Bristol
- s. 40(2), Chair, Homes England
- s. 40(2), former Chief Executive, Homes England

Introduction

25. The Chief Executive began the meeting by introducing the new Chair and explaining that as the new Chair, Homes England is arranging a series of introductory one-to-one meetings with key partners and political stakeholders.

Bristol update

26. The Mayor provided an update on progress in the development of Bristol. He noted the city has been selected as one of two creative hubs by Channel four.
27. The Mayor talked the Chair through the Western Gateway initiative (the west of England's Northern Powerhouse / Midlands Engine) chaired by s. 40(2) from Airbus.
28. The Mayor noted the variance in living standards in the city with 25% of children living in income deprived households. He reflected there is concern that Covid-19 will exacerbate the problem.
29. The Mayor noted that housing is the single most important intervention at his disposal and that he had personally taken over the housing brief within the council's Cabinet. In this role, he has spent recent weeks engaging with developers to understand blockers and opportunities to unlock development.
30. The Mayor reflected that he has a positive relationship with Homes England and is keen that this continues.

Bristol Temple Quarter

31. The Chief Executive moved the discussion on to the Temple Quarter development providing an overview of the history to the current position.
32. The discussion focused on the positive impact and wider opportunities that could be opened for this part of Bristol if the scheme gets the go ahead.
33. Focus for the scheme needs to move to the tactical battle to get the business case over the line and approved within Government.
34. Network Rail have identified a window next summer for enabling works which could fit around planned improvements they will also be undertaking at the station at the same time. Therefore, getting agreement for the scheme to proceed is vital to ensure the works can be planned.
35. The Chair was keen to get a sense of how large the scheme is; how soon approval would be needed and whether there are any local political blockers. The Mayor noted the scheme enjoys cross party support and the business community is also behind the scheme.

Housing Festival

36. The Mayor talked the Chair through the Housing Festival initiative in the city as an opportunity to showcase innovative solutions to housing development. The festival also enables the public to interact with new housing solutions such as Z Pods.
37. The Chief Executive noted that Homes England had been enthusiastic supporters of the festival as a way of encouraging places to think about housing in a more creative way.

AOB

38. The Mayor discussed the city's work to establish a Single City Plan to 2050 working with the wider community and agreed to share the outputs of this work with Homes England.
39. The Mayor noted he is part of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Housing, Church and Community led by social housing finance expert, s. 40(2) and recommended that Homes England should seek a meeting with s. 40(2)

ANNEX C: BRISLINGTON MEADOWS NEWS ARTICLE (BRISTOL LIVE)

40. Link to article: [Homes England to push forward with plans to build hundreds of new homes on Brislington Meadows - Bristol Live \(bristolpost.co.uk\)](https://www.bristolpost.co.uk/news/bristol-live/homes-england-to-push-forward-with-plans-to-build-hundreds-of-new-homes-on-brislington-meadows-2023-03-21/)