



Homes England

Date: 5 October 2023

Our Ref: RFI4478

Tel: 0300 1234 500

Email: infogov@homesengland.gov.uk

[REDACTED]
By Email Only

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: Request for Information – RFI4478

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:

The Government will also take definitive action to unblock development where it has stalled, providing £500,000 of funding to assist with planning capacity. Cambridge City Council, Anglian Water, Land Securities plc and Homes England will work together to accelerate the relocation of Water Treatment Works in North East Cambridge (Subject to planning permission), unlocking an entire new city quarter – delivering approaching 6,000 sustainable well designed homes in thriving night neighbourhoods - as well as schools, parks and over 1,000,000 ft.² of much-needed commercial life science research space.

Please supply the following:

- **Minutes of the meeting with Cambridge City Council, Anglian Water, Land Securities plc and Homes England at which acceleration of the WWTP relocation project was discussed**
- **Copies of the legislation which will allow acceleration of the Development Consent Process by which planning permission would be given to move the WRC from its current industrial site to Green Belt thereby producing a brownfield site for development.**

Response

We can inform you that we do hold some of the information that you have requested. We will answer your queries in turn below.

6th Floor
Windsor House
42 - 50 Victoria Street, Westminster
London, SW1H 0TL

0300 1234 500
@HomesEngland
www.gov.uk/homes-england





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Minutes of the meeting with Cambridge City Council, Anglian Water, Land Securities plc and Homes England at which acceleration of the WWTP relocation project was discussed

We can inform you that we do hold the information that you have requested. However, we rely on section 43(2) of the FOIA to withhold the information from disclosure.

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 meeting minutes 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 the organisation.

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; and
- Homes England acknowledges there is interest from the public in how we work with our partners in relation to progressing development.

Arguments in favour of withholding:

- The allocation of funding is subject to a robust assessment process that includes a detailed value for money review ensuring that we protect and allocate public funding efficiently and effectively. By disclosing this information would be providing an inaccurate indication on development costs. This would not be in the public interest as it would put development at risk, inflate prices and damage Homes England's reputation as a partner. This would negatively affect public money and nullify work already undertaken;





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- Disclosure is likely to be prejudicial to the commercial interests of both Homes England and third parties as there is reasonable expectation that such information provided to Homes England in this capacity would not be disclosed and would not then potentially be relied upon by other parties;
- By disclosing commercial information, this would adversely affect the confidentiality of information surrounding this development. This in turn would prejudice future agreements and development proposals with third parties as it would be likely to weaken contractual relationships and being able to negotiate future deals which would not be cost effective for the wider public, the organisation and third parties.
- 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>

Copies of the legislation which will allow acceleration of the Development Consent Process by which planning permission would be given to move the WRC from its current industrial site to Green Belt thereby producing a brownfield site for development.

We can confirm that Homes England does not hold the information detailed in your request.

To conclude that the information is not held, we have searched with our Infrastructure Grants team 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>





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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 we do not hold any specific policy which allows for the acceleration of the Development Consent Process. However, we advise that you visit the National Insurance Planning website via the below link which explains the process.

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

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

Information Governance Team
Homes England
Windsor House
6th Floor
42-50 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0TL
United Kingdom

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.





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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

