

Reference: 2026-077

Thank you for your email in which you requested the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA):

Are you able to provide a final figure for the SFO's total legal fees for the ENRC case (the strand that has just settled). This would cover from the start of proceedings until the settlement last week please.

Response

The information you have requested is exempt by virtue of Section 22(1)(a) of the FOIA. This section provides that:

Information is exempt if—

(a) the information is held by the public authority with a view to its publication, by the authority or any other person, at some future date (whether determined or not).

How the exemption is engaged

The SFO holds the information you have requested, the total legal fees for the ENRC case, with the intention of publishing it as part of the SFO's Annual Report and Accounts 2026-27, which will be published in summer 2027. Therefore, it is exempt under section 22 of the FOIA.

We consider it reasonable for this information to be withheld until that publication date. These legal costs will be presented alongside other financial information, such as expenditure, staff costs, income and expenditure, and financial commitments. Releasing a standalone figure in advance of this process would risk presenting the information out of context and would pre-empt its planned publication as part of the Annual Reports and Accounts.

Public interest test

Section 22 is a qualified exemption and requires consideration of the public interest for the exemption to be maintained.

We recognise there is a public interest in transparency regarding how the SFO spends public money. We take steps to meet this interest by publishing comprehensive data annually in [the SFO's Annual Report and Accounts](#), and we continue to update the kinds of information we publish in line with the requests we receive.

However, we consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure at this time. The legal fees relating to the ENRC case will be published in the Annual Report and Accounts, alongside the wider financial and contextual information needed to interpret the figures appropriately. Releasing data ahead of this formal publication process could lead to confusion or misinterpretation, particularly given the public profile of this case. There is also a public interest in ensuring that official financial data is released consistently, in context, rather than on a piecemeal basis in response to individual requests.

More information about exemptions, the precedent effect, and the public interest test is available on the ICO's website: www.ico.org.uk.