



CabinetOffice

Honours and Appointments Secretariat

Admiralty Arch South
The Mall
London
SW1A 2WH

Telephone: 020 7276 2706
Fax: 020 7276 2766
Email: marion.moore@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk
Web: www.honours.gov.uk

FOI266889

30 July 2009

Dear Mr Smith,

I am writing further to your request for information dated 2 July 2009 to advise you that some of the information you requested is held by this department but is being withheld under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The exemptions which apply to this information are: 37(b) the conferring by the Crown of any honour or dignity and section 40, personal information within the meaning of the Data Protection Act 1998 which is an absolute exemption and section 41 which is also an absolute exemption and relates to information provided in confidence,

You requested that we provide the correspondence/recommendations that the House of Lords Appointments Commission submitted to the Prime Minister, or the Prime Minister's Office, regarding the suitability, or not, of Mr Michael Martin, to be appointed to the House of Lords.

Section 37 is a qualified exemption and subject to a public interest balance test. Whilst we fully accept and welcome the desirability for transparency and openness of government, we believe the public interest would not be served by disclosing the information you have sought. Our reason for withholding under this exemption is that there is a need to ensure that those asked for information about particular candidates can give it honestly. The information is given in confidence, and those supplying it need to be satisfied that confidences will be respected so that decisions about honours and dignities are taken on the basis of full information about the person concerned and their achievements. The benefits of disclosing the information to the public are outweighed by the need to uphold the integrity of the Honours system and ensure that those making recommendations and decisions regarding honours and appointments can do so in the knowledge that the information given and received is confidential.

Outside of the Freedom of Information Act you may like to note that the motion to elevate Mr Martin to the House of Lords can be found in Hansard.

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

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Sue Gray
Director
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London

SW1A 2AS

email: foiteam@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely



Marion Moore
Policy Officer