

16th April 2010

Royal Mail Group

Mr Robert Whittaker

Freedom of Information Unit
2nd Floor
Royal Mail Sheffield
Pond Street
Sheffield
S98 6HR

By email: request-30917-axxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.xxx

foi@royalmail.com
www.royalmail.com

Dear Mr. Whittaker

Re: Freedom of Information Request

I am writing in response to your email on the 17th March 2010. We have considered your request under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In your email you requested the following:

"I'd therefore like to know whether your "Central Collections Management Database" does include information about each post-box, and exactly what information about each box is stored there.

If it does, I would like an extract from this database listing each post-box, with whatever of the following is held there: it's number, location description, postcode, and last collection times. For each box, I'd also like whatever location coordinates / data is used to calculate the "Position of Box on an electronic map".

I can confirm that the Central Collections Management Database contains the following fields relating to post-boxes in the UK. It is important to note that the database is only for Pillar Boxes and not Post Office counters or business boxes.

- Road/Location
- Postcode District
- Box Number
- Barcode
- Collection Office
- Cost Centre



Cont...

- Box Type
- Final Collection Time – Weekday
- Final Collection Time – Saturday
- Northing
- Easting
- Latitude
- Longitude

Due to the nature of the numerous ways that information about post-boxes has been collated over time, Royal Mail Group cannot guarantee the accuracy of the locations information which is currently held in the database. This could be for a number of reasons such as when the latitude and longitude data is based on a postcode location and not the precise location of the postbox itself. Although this information is suitable for Royal Mail's operational requirements – such as route planning, it would not necessarily be accurate for use in other ways. It is also Royal Mail's intention to renew the CMD data and use the updated information to improve the information available to the public via our websites. A postbox finder is intended to be added to the branch finder feature on the Post Office website in the future.

We consider a detailed extract from the current data to be exempt from disclosure under Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act, Prejudice to Commercial Interests. I am therefore unable to provide the further information that you have requested. We believe that the release of potentially inaccurate information which will quickly become out of date is likely to cause problems for Royal Mail customers – with incorrect details of postboxes being quoted outside of Royal Mail's control. This would be likely to result in dissatisfaction amongst customers which would damage public perception of Royal Mail. This release of this information would also diminish the value of Royal Mail's investment in renewing the information in order to provide customers with accurate and regularly updated information directly through its own websites.

This exemption is subject to the public interest test, but we believe that in this case the public interest lies in withholding information. It would not be in the public interest to potentially misinform members of the public with information which is not suitable for uses other than its current purpose. The new postbox location information to be created by Royal Mail will far better serve the interests of the public. It would not benefit the public to release current information which will not be updated and could therefore cause confusion and difficulties for customers. For example, if postboxes are later moved or removed from their present location. Therefore we believe that in all circumstances of the case the public

Cont...

interest is best met by applying the exemption and that the information should not be disclosed.

I am sorry that your request cannot be met in full on this occasion. If for any reason you are not satisfied with this response, you do have the right to request a review. If you wish to do so please set out in writing your grounds of appeal and send to the Head of Information Compliance, Royal Mail Group, Company Secretary's Office, 100 Victoria Embankment, LONDON, EC4Y 0HQ. An internal panel will then review the decision, and you will be advised of the outcome.

If, having requested an internal review by Royal Mail, you are still not satisfied with our response you also have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Yours Sincerely



Daniel Tulp
Freedom of Information Case Officer
foi@royalmail.com