



Robert Johnson

By email: request-100335-be21ad3e@whatdotheyknow.com

9 February 2012

Your FOI request ref FOI003-0011

Dear Mr Johnson

I refer to your email of the 13 January 2012 in which you requested information regarding Stockton and District Advice and Information Service Bureau ("SDAIB"). We have treated your request under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA").

I have restated your request along with our response.

1. What funding applications have been made to you by SDAIB from Jan 2009 to date including if possible the promised outcomes.

2. Which of these applications have been successful during this period?

I can confirm that we hold the information requested.

Since 1 January 2009, SDAIB have submitted 11 applications to the Big Lottery Fund ("the Fund"), of which 4 were successful. Please find attached a document (Annex 1) which provides details, including the project outcomes, of these applications.

We have withheld the details, including the project outcomes, of those applications which did not receive funding under section 43(2) of the FOIA.

Section 43(2) states:

43(2) Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

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UK Chair
Peter Ainsworth

England Chair
Nat Sloane

UK Chief Executive
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We are committed to bringing real improvements to communities and to the lives of people most in need





We are of the opinion that the commercial interests of the Fund and SDAIB are likely to be prejudiced should details of their unsuccessful applications be released into the public domain. Applying for a grant through the Fund is a competitive process. It is likely that SDAIB will re-use the information provided in their application forms, including the project outcomes, when re-applying for future grants from a range of sources. If we were to release SDAIB's project outcomes, it could damage their ability to engage in competitive situations, and therefore limit their success of receiving a grant in the future.

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption. We must therefore weigh up the public interest in disclosure of the information against the public interest in maintaining the exemption.

We acknowledge that there is a strong public interest in BIG being open and transparent about its decision making processes. Disclosure of the details of those applications that did not receive funding would promote accountability within the Fund and would allow the public to understand, and challenge the decisions made.

However there are a number of public interest arguments in favour of maintaining the exemption.

There is a strong interest in ensuring that organisations are able to compete fairly. As referred to above, disclosure of the project outcomes could lead to unfairness. We must ensure that organisations that compete for funding are not disadvantaged by the disclosure of this information and have an equal chance to obtain funding.

There is also strong interest in the Fund obtaining value for money. If we were to release the details of those applications that were unsuccessful, it could deter them, or other organisations, from applying to the Fund. This would limit the diversity of the applications received and the projects we fund, prejudicing our ability to obtain value for money.

We acknowledge that the public have a right to know details of successful applications and how they intend to spend public funds to meet their outcomes. However, those applications which are unsuccessful have not received public funds; therefore the public interest in their details being released is not as strong.



If you have any further queries regarding the FOIA please contact myself at the address below. Your reference is: **FOI003-0011**. It would be helpful if you could quote this reference in any future correspondence.

If you are unhappy with the level of service you have received in relation to your request, you may ask for an internal review. If this is the case, contact me and I will arrange for the decision to be reviewed.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyndsay Scott".

Lyndsay Scott
Freedom of Information Officer
Big Lottery Fund
Tel: 0191 376 1644

Email: freedomofinformation@biglotteryfund.org.uk