Dear Mr Speight,

Thank you for your request of 17 March 2015 under the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Your exact request was:

“I would like to find more background about the recent announcement of the devolution of health funding to Manchester. See, for example, the following report from 25 February 2015:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-31615218

In particular I would be grateful for the following information on this topic:
- Communications from the relevant finance and/or policy teams to Ministers, the Permanent Secretary and Special Advisors.
- Communications between Ministerial Private Offices and Special Advisors.
- Communications between Ministerial Private Offices and officials at No10, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury.
- Communications between the relevant finance and/or policy teams in the Department and officials at No10, Cabinet Office and HM Treasury.

I appreciate that there might be quite a lot of information here - I would therefore suggest that the request is limited to information from the beginning February 2015 to the current date.”

I can confirm that the Department of Health holds information relevant to your request.

However, we consider that this information is exempt under Section 35(1)(a) of the FOI Act, which provides protection for information that relates to the formulation or development of government policy. Section 35(1)(a) is a qualified exemption and requires consideration of the public interest test.

The Department recognises the general public interest in making this information available for the sake of greater transparency and openness. However, the Department believes that the public interest lies in protecting the policy-making process and preserving the ability of officials in the Department to engage in free and candid discussion of policy options without apprehension that suggested courses of action may be held up to scrutiny before they have been fully developed or evaluated.
If you have any queries about this email, please contact me. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Head of the Freedom of Information Team  
Department of Health  
Room G18  
Richmond House  
79 Whitehall,  
London  
SW1A 2NS  

Email: freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk

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

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

Yours sincerely,

Danny Lamond  

Freedom of Information Officer  
Department of Health  

freedomofinformation@dh.gsi.gov.uk