

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Gerlinde Gniewosz
(By email)

Our Ref: MGLA200420-9439

15 May 2020

Dear Ms Gniewosz

Thank you for your request for information which the Greater London Authority (GLA) received on 17 April 2020. Your request has been dealt with under the Environmental Information regulations (EIR) 2004.

You asked for:

Provide a copy of all reports, communications that the GLA holds on Cressingham Gardens Estate regeneration in the borough of Lambeth. This may also be referred to Trinity Rise site or Longford Walk

Our response to your request is as follows:

In February 2017, we previously advised you that your request for all correspondence with Lambeth council in connection with decent homes backlog funding would be manifestly unreasonable and we consider that this request is even wider in scope and falls under the exception under regulation 12(4)(b) as 'manifestly unreasonable'. Under the EIR public authorities may refuse requests that are manifestly (i.e. obviously or clearly) unreasonable when the cost of compliance is too great.

The GLA considers that it would be manifestly unreasonable (within the meaning of regulation 12(4)(b) of the EIR) to have to review the entire content of all communications in a granular way in order to apply the EIR, which would include a process of identifying what information could and equally could not be disclosed.

A public authority can only withhold information if the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. We are mindful of the general public interest in transparency and accountability, and of the presumption in favour of disclosure and to read exceptions restrictively.

We consider that a proportion of the information would be likely engage one or more of the disclosure exception provisions of the EIR. We would therefore have to spend a considerable amount of time reviewing each piece of information individually to considering whether it would be exempt from disclosure.

We also note that a large volume of information caught by this request will be administrative in nature and which we do not consider would inform any public debate in a meaningful way. The time and resources required to review this information would be unreasonable given the potential for it to remain exempt information and (where it is suitable for release under the EIR) the limited benefit to the public debate on this matter given the information already publicly available on this matter.

On balance therefore, it is our view that the public interest in maintaining the exception in regulation 12(4)(b) outweighs the public interest in disclosure. I understand this response may cause frustration, but it aims to ensure - as recognised in the guidance - that our responsibilities under the act do not distract from our other statutory functions as a public authority.

The Information Commissioners Office have providing guidance¹ to members of the public on submitting 'catch-all' requests for information to help highlight the potential problems in submitting broad requests that could either be open-ended or involve large quantities of information:

Information request dos and don'ts: Send 'catch-all' requests for information (such as 'please provide me with everything you hold about 'x') when you aren't sure what specific documents to ask for.

It is also highly likely that there will also be some repetition within previous requests you have submitted, for example:

- <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information/foi-disclosure-log/foi-crossingham-gardens-regeneration-funding-agreement-april-2018>
- <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information/foi-disclosure-log/eir-lambeth-affordable-homes>

I appreciate it is often difficult to understand how an organisation such as the GLA holds and stores its information and it is our job to help provide advice and assistance to help you understand what we hold and what we could retrieve in response to your request:

You may wish to provide some further context to your request on what information you are seeking so that we can target our searches accordingly (and avoid any repetition covering your previous requests). You may wish to ask about the current funding allocations and conditions for the Crossingham Estate and the current status of any ballot exemption, for example. It would also be helpful if you could provide a reasonable time frame and name the parties with who you are interested in receiving communications with.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Paul Robinson
Information Governance Officer

¹ <https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/official-information/>

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>