



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

16 February 2022

Dear Ms Whiffen

Our ref: FOI2022/00914

Thank you for your email of 19 January in which you make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Your full request is attached.

We hold some information in relation to your request.

Some information is already in the public domain and is therefore covered by section 21 of the Act (information accessible by other means).

It can, for example, be found at:

[Prime Minister and Chancellor visit Middlesbrough after "Budget success" for region | ITV News Tyne Tees](#)

[Boris Johnson and Rishi Sunak visit North East to mark Teesside Freeport announcement | Hartlepool Mail](#)

[Johnson and Sunak hail freeports as 'transformational' on visit to Teesside - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

The remaining information engages the exemption at Section 35(1)(a) and (d) of the Act (*formulation of government policy*).

Section 35 is a qualified exemption and requires that I consider where the balance of public interest falls between disclosure and exemption.

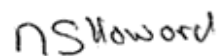
I recognise that there is a general interest in transparency. Recognising this the Government publishes details of meetings that ministers, including the Prime Minister, have with external organisations and individuals.

I have weighed that public interest against the stronger public interest of ensuring that in order to be of the highest quality, policy-making and its implementation must be informed by a full consideration of all the options.

Ministers must be able to discuss policy freely and frankly to understand all of the possible implications when developing Government policy. Ministerial Private Offices must be also free to provide their Minister with all the available facts and information before the Minister conducts a meeting, to ensure that material business is managed effectively and efficiently.

Having carefully considered the balance of public interest in relation to this matter, I am of the view that it falls in favour of withholding this information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'N Howard', written in a cursive style.

NICHOLAS HOWARD

Ms Rose Whiffen

Incoming request

For the meeting held on 04/03/2021 between Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP and PD Ports, with purpose "To discuss success of TeesPort freeport bid and future TeesPort projects"

could you please provide the following information:

- A full list of attendees, including full names and titles as well as who the attendee represents
- A copy of the meeting agenda
- Meeting notes/minutes taken during the meeting, as well as any briefing notes and papers
- Any correspondence associated with the attendees, including debriefs of the meeting via email or other forms of communication.



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If you are unhappy with the level of service you have received from this office in relation to any aspect of your request, you may ask for an internal review.

You should contact:

Rachel Anderson
Head of Freedom of Information
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

Email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.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 the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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