



Department
for Transport

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Mr. Peter Forbes

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Our Ref: F0021353

18 August 2022

Dear Mr Forbes

FOI Request F0021353 Aeronautical Assessment of Denham Aerodrome for HS2

Thank you for your request for information which we received on 22 July 2022. Your request is being dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

You asked for the following information:-

“I would be grateful if you could send me a copy of the Final Report for this assessment. I already have the Draft Report, dated 2 March 2021, but I assume that this has been updated.

I would also like copies of any submissions made by or on behalf of the operator of Denham Aerodrome (Bickerdike [stet] Aerodromes Ltd) relating to the Draft or Final Reports.”

Please find attached, as requested, a copy of the final version of the Aeronautical Assessment of Denham Aerodrome for HS2 which was finalised on 5 July 2021 by Jacobs.

The Department holds information that is relevant to the second part of your request but we consider that it is exempt from disclosure. The information found within scope of these questions is being withheld in reliance on the exemptions under the FOI Section 43 (2) – ‘exempts information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any legal person (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity)’. This exemption requires a public interest test which we have carried out below.

Public Interest Arguments for Disclosure

HS2 is a programme of national significance and is one of the Government's flagship infrastructure programmes. It is therefore a matter of great interest to the general public. There is a clear public interest in how decisions are made and what evidence they are based on. Disclosure of commercially confidential information can allow the public to scrutinise that information and to hold government to account on the use of public money.

Public Interest Arguments for Withholding

The information that we hold that is relevant to the second part of your enquiry is contained in a separate report that was commissioned by a third party and submitted to this Department for information. It expresses the views of the authors, not those of the Government or other public bodies involved in decision-making on the HS2 project.

As the information contained in this report belongs to a third party, we sought their views on the release of that report. We were advised that they strongly oppose its release as there is information in the report that is commercially sensitive. The General Aviation market in the South East is highly competitive due to the lack of suitable accommodation and therefore the owners would not wish such information to be divulged to potential competitors as they consider it could threaten their legitimate business interests.

Placing this information into the public domain at this time would also be likely to prejudice the reputation of this Department in relation to handling of information provided to it in confidence.

Balancing the Public Interest Test

We note the importance of transparency and public awareness, particularly on a nationally significant Government programme. However, having now carried out the public interest test, we have concluded that the balance of the public interest is in favour of withholding the requested information. This therefore means that the information you have requested will not be disclosed.

Appeals procedure

If you remain dissatisfied with the way we have responded to or handled your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. These should be submitted within two calendar months of the date of this letter and addressed to the FOI Advice Team at FOI-Advice-Team-DFT@dft.gov.uk. Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you ask for an internal review and are still not content with the outcome, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via their online form: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern/>

Yours sincerely

Correspondence Team
High Speed Rail Group