



Cabinet Office

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Lee Wilkinson

By email: [request-633431-2f2e215e@whatdotheyknow.com](mailto:request-633431-2f2e215e@whatdotheyknow.com)

FOI Reference: FOI329728  
10/06/2020

Dear Lee Wilkinson

I refer to your request where you asked:

*"All communications relating to my request [FOI329251] which were sent/received by the Cabinet Office, FOI team and Dominic Cummings/his associates during the handling of this request.*

*Your request above was embedded as point 3 in your request for an internal review of our decision on your original request reference FOI329251. As it asks for new information we are treating it as a separate request for information."*

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our records, I have established that the new information you requested is held by the Cabinet Office.

I apologise for the delay in responding to your request.

The information is being withheld because it is exempt under sections 36(2)(b)(i) and (ii) of the Freedom of Information Act (the Act) because its disclosure would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice, and the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation.

Section 36 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of this material.

Factors in favour of disclosure are that there is a public interest in citizens being confident that decisions are taken on the basis of the best available information. There is a public interest in transparency so as to allow public scrutiny of the manner in which a public authority fulfils its statutory obligations under the Act. There is a public interest generally in ensuring that requests made under the Act are properly considered and that the reasons for the response are justified and recorded.

Factors in favour of withholding the information are that disclosure would be likely to jeopardise the effective handling of FOI requests and internal reviews in future, particularly in the provision of frank advice and opinions. Officials need to be able to think through all the implications of particular options. If the requested information were to be published, this would have, or at least would be likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of the advice and the way in which it is given. The ability of officials to discuss FOI requests freely and frankly with colleagues would be adversely affected by the disclosure of this information. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding the requested information.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the FOI Team quoting the reference number above.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Eirian Walsh Atkins  
Cabinet Office  
70 Whitehall  
London  
SW1A 2AS  
email: [foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto: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 your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office

Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

*Yours sincerely*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. B. Smith', written in a cursive style.

*FOI Team  
Cabinet Office*