

**Our reference: 20271 EIR**

20 September 2022

Dear Mr Parnham,

Thank you for your request of 19 August 2022 in which you asked for the following information:

“all correspondence between the report's authors and reviewers, and also other councillors / council staff, and any external stakeholders also engaged, regarding the specific issue of evaluation road sampling - i.e., which roads were selected for evaluation in this report. Because multiple versions of the reports were created (including one for the abandoned LTN decision meeting in February and another for July cabinet meeting), I would like the particular focus of your correspondence search to be in the run up to the completion of the first draft of the report, which was completed on 19 January 2022. It was during this period that when the sampling decisions were mostly likely to have been taken - the sampling did not change for the latter versions of the report. I would therefore suggest you initially concentrate your efforts in location correspondence for the four-month period leading up to the completion of the report's first draft.”

It is the Council's view that to comply with your request would absorb enough of its staff's time to engage regulation 12(4)(b) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Regulation 12(4)(b) provides that a public authority is excepted from complying with a request for information if that authority considers that it would place a '*substantial and unreasonable burden on [its] resources*'.

It is the Council's estimate that to provide you with the information that you have requested would absorb approximately 41 hours of staff time. The Council considers that this represents a substantial burden and an unreasonable diversion of its resources from the provision of essential public services. The Council has estimated the time that it would take to deal with your request accordingly:

1. Make enquiries of the technical feasibility of obtaining in-box access to persons who have left Oxfordshire County Council. If technical access is possible, obtaining the necessary HR permission to access these in-boxes = 4 hours
2. Undertake a broadly defined data search of 6 email in boxes over 4 months = 2 hours
3. Read every email from the data search to identify if relevant to the questions = 24 hours
4. Redacting any personal data from the relevant emails (copying/pasting into a word document) = 8 hours
5. Collating selected emails into a formal response = 3 hours

**TOTAL TIME= 41 hours**

As you can see, to comply with your request would impose a substantial burden on the Council's resources. In reaching its decision, the Council also considered whether disclosure would be in the public interest.

#### Arguments in favour of disclosure

1. That there is an explicit presumption in favour of disclosure;
2. Disclosure could further the understanding of, and participation in, public debate and
3. Releasing this information may promote transparency and increase public awareness.

#### Arguments against disclosure

1. Committing a considerable amount of the Council's resources to answering this request would detract from the services that it provides in other areas;
2. Taking staff away from their current duties;
3. That there is a need to ensure that public funds are applied effectively; and
4. The importance of the matter at hand does not constitute an overriding or exceptional reason for disclosure.

On this occasion, the Council finds that the public interest in refusing your request outweighs the public interest in complying with it.

#### Advice and Assistance

In accordance with the Council's duty to now advise and assist you, might I suggest that you consider amending your request to narrow its scope.

For instance, you may wish to amend the request you have made; we are able to provide as an alternative an explanation of the process of sensory selection without reference to historic communications.

#### Internal review

If you are dissatisfied with the service or response to your request, you can ask for an internal review as follows:

- Contact the Freedom of Information team in Customers and Organisational Development: [foi@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:foi@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- Write to the Freedom of Information team at the FREEPOST address:

Freedom of Information Team  
Oxfordshire County Council  
FREEPOST RTLL-ECKS-GLUA  
Oxford OX1 1YA

If you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request or complaint, you have a right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at:  
The Information Commissioner's Office,  
Wycliffe House,

Water Lane,  
Wilmslow,  
Cheshire,  
SK9 5AF  
Telephone: 0303 123 1113  
Website: [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Please let me know if you have further enquiries. I would be grateful if you could use the reference number given at the top of this email.

Yours sincerely,

Aditi Bhattacharya  
Central Locality Assistant Transport Planner  
Placemaking  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Email: [Aditi.bhattacharya@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Aditi.bhattacharya@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
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