



Information Rights Unit  
HM Treasury  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

Matt Smith

020 7270 5000  
foirequests@hmtreasury.gov.uk  
www.gov.uk/hm-treasury

24 May 2021

Ref: FOI2021/13212

Dear Matt Smith

## Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your enquiry of 23 April 2021, which we have considered under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the FOI Act).

You asked for the following information:

*"From previous FOI requests (see your Ref: FOI2021/02804) we know that 3 HM Treasury officials - Lindsey Whyte, Suzy Kantor, and Beth Russell - had early sight of the final version of the Loan Charge Review ("the draft") prior to its publication .*

*They were able to read the report during a meeting on the 9th of December 2019, during which they were only supposed to suggest corrections to factual errors.*

*I would like you to disclose all emails to/from those three officials which reference the Draft, during the two weeks before the meeting, to 2 weeks after. (so, from the 25 November 2019 to the 23 December 2019).*

*The limited period of time should result in few emails. However should this exceed the FOI limit, please reduce the number of officials to 2 (or 1, if that is still above the limit) - in that case please keep the most senior official in."*

Following a search of our records, we can confirm that HM Treasury does hold information within the scope of your request. However, your request as currently drafted would require extensive searches of officials' inboxes to locate the information we hold. This is because the Treasury does not collate information in a way that could be used to easily identify possible information within the scope of your request.

We estimate that the time needed to search for and locate the information we hold would exceed a set limit which is known as the appropriate limit. The appropriate limit for central Government is set at £600. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending three and a half working days in determining whether the department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting that information. Under section 12 of the FOI Act, departments are not obliged to comply with requests in these circumstances.

You invited us to provide information up to the cost limit, prioritising the correspondence of different officials. The FOI Act does not require authorities to address requests in this way. If the request as a whole exceeds the cost limit, then the exemption at section 12 applies and the authority is not required to proceed with it further. We intend accordingly

not to proceed with this request. It may be that if you were to revise your request, we may be able to help you. However, I cannot guarantee that this would be the case.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us. Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

Information Rights Unit

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If you are not happy with this reply, you can request a review by writing to HM Treasury, Information Rights Unit, 1 Horse Guards Road, London SW1A 2HQ or by emailing us at the address below. Any review request must be made within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

Email: [foirequests@hmtreasury.gov.uk](mailto:foirequests@hmtreasury.gov.uk)

It would assist our review if you set out which aspects of the reply concern you and why you are dissatisfied.

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The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF (or via their website at: <https://ico.org.uk>).