



Mike Haville

Via: request-765111-b89d5a07@whatdotheyknow.com

15 February 2022

Dear Mike Haville

Cabinet Office Internal Review Reference: **IR2021/17775**
(Original Case Reference: **FOI2021/12794**)

REVIEW OF REQUEST UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

Thank you for your email of 1 September 2021, and apologies for our delay in responding. You asked for an internal review of our response to your request for information of 14 June 2021. In your original request, you asked for information about evidence on HS2 passenger growth presented to the Prime Minister in January 2020.

I have carefully reviewed the handling of your request and considered the further points you make about the ICO guidance on section 35 of the Freedom of Information Act. As set out in our original letter of 1 September, the evidence on HS2 passenger growth that you requested is likely to be used in ongoing policy development, for instance decisions on the later phase of HS2, which is still under development, and therefore does not effectively meet the definition of a policy decision made in the ICO guidance you referenced. This evidence may also be used in ongoing policy formulation, for instance in deciding whether supplementary infrastructure projects may be needed alongside HS2. To ensure a frank assessment of passenger demand and transport needs, and to arrive at optimal policy solutions free from external interference, the public interest is deemed to be such that the information requested is exempt.

I have therefore concluded that the exemptions at section 35(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act were properly applied and that the balance of the public interest was fully considered, and that I should uphold the decision given in our original letter of 1 September 2021.

If you are unhappy with the handling of your request for information you, have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tarley Smith', with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the signature.

Tarley Smith
Cabinet Office