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John Robertson

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30 November 2009

FOI 437

Dear Mr Robertson,

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000

We refer to your email, received at our office on 02 November 2009, requesting the following information:

"Please provide the latest biannual update provided to the London Development Agency by the British Fashion Council as a formal report, covering LDA funding of London Fashion Week.

Please provide the most recent externally commissioned impact evaluation that has been completed."

Duty to confirm or deny

We confirm that we do hold some of the information of the description specified in your request.

Information Held and Provided

Please see attached the most recent biannual update, complete at the date of your request, provided to the London Development Agency (LDA) by the British Fashion Council (BFC) regarding the LDA's funding of London Fashion Week (LFW).

Please note that although the report is stated to be a quarterly report, it encompasses 2 quarters (quarter 3 and quarter 4 of financial year 2008/09) and makes up the biannual update.

Please be advised that under Section 2 of the Freedom of Information Act, the duty of a public authority to give access to information does not apply in respect of information which is exempt under the Act, applying the public interest balance, where necessary, to the application of the exemption.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Section 43(2) of the Act exempts information from disclosure if disclosure under the Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). We consider that this exemption is relevant to some information incorporated within the biannual report, in this case the figures relating to the breakdown of private sector sponsorship received by the BFC on page 15 of the report under section 5. These figures have therefore been redacted.

The redacted figures contain information which is not available through the publicly available annual company accounts for BFC. BFC compete with other fashion week organisers to secure sponsorship, including sponsorship for London Fashion Week. From such a global figure for private sector funding of BFC or London Fashion Week it would be possible for those in the industry to estimate the level of sponsorship being provided from the event's main sponsor. If sponsorship information were known it would in our view be likely to:

- weaken the commercial position of the BFC in a competitive market, by revealing details of levels of sponsorship, including that being contributed by the main sponsor for LFW, which could be of advantage to third party potential sponsors when negotiating future sponsorship opportunities.
- weaken the commercial position of the BFC in a competitive market by, revealing details of sponsorship which, when viewed in comparison to sponsorship available to BFC competitors, could impact on the LFW brand and perception of brand within the fashion industry. This could therefore damage the company's business reputation and the confidence that customers, suppliers, contracting parties and investors may have in working with the company.

In reaching this conclusion we have taken into account the representations of BFC whilst recognising that is the LDA which is required to make the decision in response to your request, in light of those representations.

The exemption of prejudice to commercial interest is a qualified exemption. This means that we are required to consider whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the figures relating to the breakdown of private sector funding received by the BFC. We consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption in respect of the requested information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because:

- there is a strong likelihood that commercial prejudice will be suffered by BFC (as summarised above).
- disclosure of the information may prevent BFC or other potentially affected parties, from providing the LDA with information of this nature in the future, thus undermining the ability of the LDA to perform its functions
- when considering the nature of the information which has been withheld there is no overriding interest in our view which, notwithstanding these private interests in withholding the information, leans in favour of disclosure to the public as a whole. The information concerns private sector sponsorship of BFC and LFW and there is no particular public interest

consideration which makes it clearly in the public interest that this information be disclosed.

We are therefore unable to communicate the exempt information to you. You will notice that it has been omitted from the attached document.

With reference to your request for the externally commissioned impact evaluation, please note that the only externally commissioned impact evaluation for this project is currently being undertaken with an expected completion date of January 2010. We are therefore unable to supply you with this information at this time.

Complaint Procedure

If you are not satisfied with our reply to your request, you may lodge a complaint with the LDA Public Liaison Unit at the postal address above or by email at info@lda.gov.uk. Your complaint will be considered by a senior management staff member and you will receive a reply to your complaint within 20 working days.

Should you remain dissatisfied after receiving our reply to your complaint, you may apply to the Information Commissioner to determine whether your request was dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

Yours sincerely,



Public Liaison Unit
LONDON DEVELOPMENT AGENCY