



## Department for International Trade

Department for International Trade  
3 Whitehall Place  
London  
SW1A 2AW

Gareth Brading  
request-520027-813fc2e4@whatdotheyknow.com

T +44 (0)20 7215 5000  
E [Foi@trade.gov.uk](mailto:Foi@trade.gov.uk)  
W [www.gov.uk/dit](http://www.gov.uk/dit)

FOI2018/04363

8 October 2018

Dear Gareth Brading,

Thank you for your email of 17 September where you requested the following information:

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, I am writing to request the following information, namely:

\* Minutes of meetings of the reconstituted Board of Trade, including membership.

It was announced in October 2017 that the historic Board of Trade was being revived. I am interested to see the minutes of meetings the Board has held, from October 2017 to present. If minutes are unavailable, I would like to know on which dates meetings of the Board took place, and how regularly they occur. Furthermore, I would like a full list of current members and advisers to the Board of Trade.

Your department should hold this information as far as I'm aware.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('the Act'), you have the right to:

- know whether we hold the information you require
- be provided with that information (subject to any exemptions under the Act which may apply).

The UK Board of Trade meets four times a year. Since it was reconvened, it has met on 12 October 2017, 29 March 2018, 17 May 2018 and 6 September 2018. The list of the Advisers to the Board of Trade can be found on GOV.UK: [www.gov.uk/government/groups/board-of-trade](http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/board-of-trade).

Following an assessment of your request for the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trade, the department has deemed your request is subject to a Section 35(1)(a) (formulation or development of government policy) exemption.

Section 35(1)(a) covers any information relating to the formulation and development of government policy in order to provide a safe space for policymaking. Under Section 35 we

recognise that there is a general public interest in disclosure of such information and that greater transparency enables the public to assess the quality of policy formulation and guidance which makes Government more accountable to the electorate. However, disclosure also poses a risk to the protection of the decision-making process which needs to be based on a broad assessment and discussion of options. In order to deliver effectively Government must be able to discuss future options, explore all plausible scenarios and set the scene in as full a way as possible. If that information were to be put into the public domain it would seriously undermine the Government's ability to formulate policy without concern about the possible reactions from external sources.

We have therefore concluded that disclosure would not be in the public interest.

### **Appeals procedure**

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original request and should be addressed to the Information Rights Unit:

Information Rights Unit  
Department for International Trade  
3 Whitehall Place  
London  
SW1A 2AW Email: [foi@trade.gov.uk](mailto:foi@trade.gov.uk)

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, 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

Yours sincerely,

**Department for International Trade**