

Mr Joe Rukin

Via email: request-346435-412dad88@whatdotheyknow.com

29 July 2016

Dear Mr Rukin

FOI16-1539 – Response

Thank you for your recent information request received via email on 18 July 2016. Your request has been considered under the *Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000* (the Act).

In your email you requested the following information:

“(a) Copies of any reports and correspondence regarding the costs and programme schedules elements of Review Point 1 of HS2; and

(b) Any as yet unpublished PAR and MPA reports in respect of HS2.”

Search for information

I can confirm that we do hold information that falls within the description of your request. However, access has been refused on the following grounds:

Section 12 – Exceeds cost limit

Under section 12 of the Act, we are not obliged to comply with a request if we estimate that the cost of determining whether we hold the information, locating and retrieving it and extracting it from other information would exceed the appropriate limit (currently £450 for HS2 Ltd). This is calculated at £25 per hour for every hour spent on the activities described.

I have received advice from a number of teams within HS2 Ltd (that worked on RP1) regarding the potential volume of documents relevant to your request and the time it would take to identify and collate them. As your request does not stipulate a timeframe, covers a broad remit and relates to a subject in which a lot of work was done by a number full time employees (i.e. over 20 FTE), there will be a high volume of documents falling within the scope of the request. In particular your request, as currently worded, captures a significant amount of email correspondence.

We estimate that there would be over 147,000 emails that relate to RP1 and could be relevant to your request. On the basis that it would take an average of two minutes to review each email and any attachment/s, and extract any information relevant to your request i.e. 2 minutes x 147,015, totals 294,030 minutes, which amounts to over 4,900 hours. The estimated cost would therefore be £122,512 (4,900 hours at £25 per hour).

The estimated number of emails is based on the following:

Assurance of RP1

- There was an average of 22 full time equivalent (FTE) employees involved in delivering assurance on RP1 over eight months. This totals 3,267 days (18 working days per month x 22 FTE staff).
- Each FTE would have sent an average of 45 emails per day (typical of a busy programme). If each individual sent 45 emails per day, this totals 147,015 emails.

This goes well beyond the limits described in the Act.

Please note that as soon as one part of a request exceeds the appropriate cost limit, the entire request should be refused under section 12.

Refining your request

To help bring the cost of responding to your request within the £450 limit, you may wish to consider narrowing its scope by choosing the information which is most important to you, and being more specific.

Examples of the ways in which you might consider narrowing the terms of your request include the following:

- Stipulating a timeframe for your request; and
- In relation to part (a) of your request, reducing the number of categories of documents you seek. For example, reports and signed letters (not emails) regarding the costs and programme schedules elements of Review Point 1 of HS2;

Please note that any reformulated request we receive will be treated as a new request and we cannot guarantee that any relevant exemptions under the Act will not apply to a revised request.

Conclusion

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request, you may complain in writing to HS2 Ltd at the above address. Please also see attached details of HS2 Ltd's complaints procedure and your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Please remember to quote reference number **FOI16-1539** in any future communication relating to this request.

Yours sincerely

Piri Norris

Freedom of Information Adviser
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited

Your right to complain to HS2 Ltd and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain to HS2 Ltd within two calendar months of the date of this letter about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested.

Your complaint will be acknowledged and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

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