



Ms O Flattery

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Enquiries to

DMT Support Team

My reference

FOI 13415

Direct Line

Your reference

Date

7 February 2018

Email

environment.foi@hants.gov.uk

Dear Ms Flattery

Information Request

Thank you for your request for information, which was received on the 8 January 2018.

In response to your request, in which you sought the following information to which we have responded to below:

On 21 September 2015 the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership gave a grant of £4m Growth Deal to The Homes and Community Agency to build the Whitehill and Borden Business and Enterprise Centre, this is a £5.65m office block with conference facilities, office space and basic training. The trading name for the centre in Louisburgh Barracks, Borden is BASE. Oxford Innovation Services Limited are running BASE.

I have the following FOI request:

1. *When did BASE open?*

BASE opened in November 2017.

2. *What is the total rentable floor space? How much of this is currently occupied?*

The total rentable floor space is approximately 900 square metres. As at the end of January 2018, 8 offices, totalling 167 square metres has been let.

3. *Please provide the application for investment submitted by The Homes and Community Agency (THACA) and any other documents which shed light on the decision making process for this investment.*

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Director of Economy, Transport and Environment
Stuart Jarvis BSc DipTP FCIHT MRTPI

The Business Case submitted to Enterprise M3 in February 2015, Programme Management Group papers dated 15 May 2015, Board Paper papers dated 28 May 2015 and independent due diligence report and associated appendices are attached.

Please note that Appendices B and I of the due diligence report are not to be disclosed to you as the documents are considered to be confidential for the purposes of Section 43 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) – commercial interests.

Enterprise M3 has an obligation to treat information relating to the applicant's financial models as confidential. This includes information relating to the marketing strategy for the Business and Enterprise Centre. Having consulted the applicant, it has been confirmed that disclosure of this information would be likely to adversely affect its economic interests as it would enable competitors to analyse these financial models and to use these models to their own advantage. This would place the operator at a commercial disadvantage in the competitive market place for any ongoing and future tenders or bids.

In applying this exception we have considered the public interest test. In favour of disclosure we have considered the importance of ensuring transparency and accountability for Enterprise M3's decisions and public spending. We have also considered the importance of raising public awareness and encouraging participation.

In favour of withholding the information you have requested, we have considered the economic consequences for the applicant and the adverse effect the disclosure would be likely to have on its business. We have also considered the detrimental effect a disclosure of confidential information would have on the Council's business relationships with the applicant, and other third parties, in ongoing and future negotiations and how such a disclosure would compromise the role of Enterprise M3 if the element of trust is lost.

We have therefore concluded that the public interest in favour of withholding the information is greater than the public interest in favour of disclosure and, as such, the information you have requested cannot be disclosed.

Where requested information is already reasonably accessible, s21 Freedom of Information Act 2000 FOIA permits public authorities to direct requestors to where the information is held.

Minutes for the Board Meeting where the decision to support this project can be found on the Enterprise M3 website. The following link provides the information you have requested.

<https://www.enterprisem3.org.uk/document/board-minutes-may-15>

S21 FOIA is an absolute exemption and does not require consideration of the public interest test.

4. *Please provide a copy of the signed contract for the investment with THACA.*

A copy of the signed contract dated 21 September 2015 with the Homes and Communities Agency is attached.

5. *Was the impact on rival office providers considered during the investment process? If so, how?*

The impact on rival office providers was considered during the investment period through an assessment of existing provision in Bordon and the surrounding area. Appendix A of the Business Case contains this information. The study was commissioned by East Hampshire District Council working in partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency and Enterprise M3. The study was to test the local demand, displacement of businesses and potential number of jobs created.

6. *Will the M3 Local Enterprise Partnership receive any return for its investment?*

No financial return to Enterprise M3 is expected. This project was taken forward by Enterprise M3 in order to realise the economic benefits identified in the Business Case.

7. *How were Oxford Innovation Services Limited selected to run BASE? How much are they paying to THACA and M3 Local Enterprise Partnership?*

Oxford Innovation Services Limited were selected following a competitive process which included advertisements in the Estates Gazette. Oxford Innovation are paying 50% of all profit to the Homes and Communities Agency after the deduction of costs as specified in the lease. Enterprise M3 receives no payment as a result of this project.

8. *Please confirm whether legal advice was obtained before entering into this investment? If so was this from Hampshire County Council's legal team or elsewhere?*

Legal advice for this project was provided by Hampshire County Council's legal team.

Under Section 40 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) personal information about a third party has been redacted from the attached records, as disclosure of the information would constitute unfair and unlawful processing of their information in breach of the first principle of the Data Protection Act 1998.

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We hope you find the information useful.

Yours sincerely

DMT Support Team

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 40 working days of receiving our response, and should be addressed to: Head of Information Compliance, Corporate Services, The Castle, Winchester, SO23 8UJ or emailed to foi@hants.gov.uk.

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.