



25 August 2017

Dear ,

Request for Information – ATISN 11441

I wrote to you on 8 August regarding your request for information. You asked for:

1. Dates of discussions with third parties relating to the assessment of the balance sheet classification of the Circuit of Wales project.
2. A copy of all correspondence between the Welsh Government and the Heads of the Valleys Development Company relating to the assessment of the balance sheet classification of the Circuit of Wales project.
3. A copy of all correspondence between the Welsh Government and HM Treasury relating to the assessment of the balance sheet classification of the Circuit of Wales project.
4. A copy of all correspondence between the Welsh Government and the Office of National Statistics relating to the assessment of the balance sheet classification of the Circuit of Wales project.
5. A copy of any externally commissioned reports relating to the assessment of the balance sheet classification of the Circuit of Wales project.
6. Dates of discussion with third parties relating to the provision of a Welsh Government guarantee to the Circuit of Wales project.
7. A copy of all correspondence between the Welsh Government and the Heads of the Valleys Development Company relating to the provision of a Welsh Government guarantee to the Circuit of Wales project.
8. The total cost of all externally commissioned due diligence work conducted in relation to the Circuit of Wales project.
9. A breakdown of the total cost of all externally commissioned due diligence work conducted in relation to the Circuit of Wales project, according to the nature of advice provided.



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10. Dates of discussions between the Welsh Government and representatives of the Heads of the Valleys Development Company.

I explained to you in my letter of 8 August that my initial estimate suggested it would be very time consuming to deal with and I asked you to refine your request. Because I have not received any further correspondence from you on this matter, I have considered the whole request as originally submitted. In doing so, I have reached the conclusion that it will cost more than the appropriate limit established in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 to consider your request. The appropriate limit specified for central government is £600. When calculating whether or not your request exceeds appropriate limit, I am allowed to consider the time it is likely to take to establish if we hold the information, locate the information, retrieve the information and extract it. If these tasks are estimated to take more than 24 hours of working time, the limit will have been exceeded.

Proposals and discussions for the Circuit of Wales have been existence for over 7 years. You have therefore requested information over a long period of time which will have involved many different teams and different departments involving several current and former staff, all of whose records would have to be consulted, where available. We hold both electronic and paper files, some of which will have been archived. Our archived records would need to be recalled and both these historic files and our current files will have to be consulted, meaning the time it will take to locate, retrieve and extract the information requested will be substantial.

For example, for a number of your questions, the broad phrasing, where you cite '*copies of all correspondence*', makes the search very difficult and very time consuming to deal with. There has been an exceptionally high volume and frequency of correspondence regarding the Circuit of Wales project. An electronic search for the information within the parameters you have given will return many records, most of which will not be relevant to your request, if at all.

An initial scoping exercise was undertaken by a member of staff on our Welsh Government database, *iShare*. This is the corporate repository for the majority of information created and received by Welsh Government Officials in the course of their duties that must be retained for business or historical purposes. A simple search on *iShare* using the words "balance sheet classification of the circuit of Wales" identified over 5000 documents and not all documents relating to your request will be called that therefore other searches would be required. At an estimate of taking 30 seconds to investigate each document to see if it contains any relevant information and to then extract it would take far in excess of 24 hrs for this exercise alone. (Additional time to undertake other *iShare* searches including email correspondence for relevant staff members will also be taken into consideration.) Because this exceeds the appropriate limit established in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, I have decided not to process your request.

You may wish to refine your request by narrowing its scope by being more specific about what information you particularly wish to obtain, including any dates or period of time relevant to the information required. For question 7, you may be interested, for example, in a specific time period, a specific subject matter or information with a particular correspondent/s. For question 10, you may be interested in only face-to-face meetings on particular dates within a shorter time-frame with particular officials. If you

do refine your request in this way, this will be treated as a new request, please be as specific and focused as possible.

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response. Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF10 3NQ or FreedomOfInformationOfficer@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,

Wycliff House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

Yours sincerely

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