



OWEN BOSWARVA
By email owen.boswarva@gmail.com

FOI Reference:FOI326449
13/7/2018

Dear OWEN BOSWARVA

I refer to your request where you asked:

I am submitting this request to both Cabinet Office and Ordnance Survey but would be content with a single response if the same information is held by both organisations.

On 13 June 2018 Cabinet Office published a narrative to accompany a government announcement on release of data from OS MasterMap. The narrative included the following statement: "Key parts of Ordnance Survey's (OS) highly detailed OS MasterMap are being made completely open under the Open Government Licence (OGL), with the remaining data being made freely available up to a threshold of transactions. This work will release £130m pa of economic value."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mastermap-announcement-narrative>

An Ordnance Survey press release published on the same date included the following statement:

"The government estimates that opening OS MasterMap in this way will release around £130m to the UK Economy. This would be through a combination of the OS data becoming freely available, the ability to release additional public datasets derived from the OS MasterMap by other public sector organisations, and the indirect benefits to the wider economy."

<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/about/news/2018/mastermap-announcement.html>

Please provide any report, paper, memorandum, or other information held that explains how the figure of £130m was estimated, including any caveats or assumptions and any contextual information necessary to understand the basis of calculation.

I am writing to advise you that following a search of our paper and electronic records, I have established that the information you requested is held by the Cabinet Office.

Some of the information you have requested is being withheld as it is exempt under section 22(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 22(1) protects information intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours maintaining the exemption in section 22(1) or disclosing the information.

The Cabinet Office recognises there is a general public interest in disclosure and the fact that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the

government. I also recognise there is a public interest in evaluating the activities of organisations entrusted with protecting national security. On the other hand, the Official Histories is an established and well respected series. It contributes to public understanding of the government policy, particularly on subjects where full disclosure of the official documents may not be possible for many years. There is a strong public interest in maintaining the confidence of scholars, journalists and the general public in the publication of this series. Disclosure of the information requested would undermine the standing of the series. Taking into account all the circumstances of the case, I have determined that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

Other information you have requested is exempt under section 35(1)(a) and (b) of the Freedom of Information Act, which protects the formulation of policy and communications between Ministers. Disclosure would weaken Ministers' ability to discuss controversial and sensitive topics free from premature public scrutiny.

Section 35 is a qualified exemption and I have considered whether the balance of the public interest favours our release of this material. There is a general public interest in disclosure of information and I recognise that openness in government may increase public trust in and engagement with the government. I recognise that the decisions Ministers make may have a significant impact on the lives of citizens and there is a public interest in their deliberations being transparent. These public interests have to be weighed against a strong public interest that policy-making and its implementation are of the highest quality and informed by a full consideration of all the options. Ministers must be able to discuss policy freely and frankly, exchange views on available options and understand their possible implications. The candour of all involved would be affected by their assessment of whether the content of the discussions will be disclosed prematurely. If discussions were routinely made public there is a risk that Ministers may feel inhibited from being frank and candid with one another. As a result the quality of debate underlying collective decision making would decline, leading to worse informed and poorer decision making. Taking into account all the circumstances of this case, I have concluded that the balance of the public interest favours withholding this information.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request or wish to request an internal review, you should write to:

Sharon Carter
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AS

email: foi-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

You should note that the Cabinet Office will not normally accept an application for internal review if it is received more than two months after the date that the reply was issued.

If you are not content with the outcome of your internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot

make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by Cabinet Office. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Khan', written in a cursive style.

FOI Team
Cabinet Office