



Response issued under the Freedom of Information Act 2000

HM Land Registry Reference: F260822

Date of Response: 24 September 2026

Requested information:

HM Land Registry published a press release about a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with Ordnance Survey:

Unlocking a better and less stressful property market

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/unlocking-a-better-and-less-stressful-property-market>

I have not been able to find a link to the MoU itself online, and do not know whether there are any plans to publish it.

I would like to request a copy of the MoU described in the above press release, along with any annexes or appendices to the MoU.

I assume there is a finalised version, but if not please provide the latest draft.

Formal response:

HM Land Registry has considered your request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

In accordance with Section 1(1) of FOIA we can confirm that HM Land Registry does hold recorded information in relation to this matter.

We attach three documents which are in scope of your request.

Section 43(2) of FOIA provides an exemption where disclosure of information would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any legal person (including the public authority holding it).

We consider that some of the information contained within these documents would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of both HM Land Registry and Ordnance Survey, and redactions have been made to all documents to protect the commercial interests of both parties.

We consider the redacted information to be exempt from disclosure under section 43(2) of FOIA.

Section 43(2) prejudice/harm



Section 43(2) is a prejudice-based exemption which says that information is exempt if its disclosure under FOIA would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any legal person (including the public authority holding it).

A commercial interest relates to a legal person's ability to participate competitively in a commercial activity.

In legal terms, the word 'prejudice' is commonly understood to mean harm. To say that disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice someone's commercial interests implies that it would (or would be likely to) harm those interests.

Section 43(2) public interest test

When applying the exemption at section 43(2) we are also obliged to consider whether the public interest test in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in its disclosure. In reaching our decision we have considered the following:

Public interest in disclosing the information:

Openness and transparency

- There is a strong public interest in openness and transparency in government affairs. Disclosure of the information would promote accountability and transparency in the way HMLR conducts its business, enabling the public to better understand the terms on which public bodies collaborate. It would also facilitate scrutiny of whether the negotiated arrangements represent value for money and adequately protect the public interest.
- It would allow for public scrutiny and to demonstrate that public resources are being used in an efficient and effective way.

Enhancing understanding of Government decision-making

- There is a public interest in understanding the basis of government arrangements, including the risks, responsibilities and expectations of the parties.

Public interest in maintaining the exemption:

Negotiating position

- HMLR considers that disclosing the redacted information would be likely to prejudice one or both parties' ability to negotiate on some commercial points. As such, this would be likely to harm both parties' commercial interests.

Reputational damage or loss of customer confidence



- Disclosure of commercially sensitive information may cause damage to HMLR's reputation, affecting the confidence that its customers or suppliers may have in its commercial operations.

Competition

- Although in many cases disclosure promotes competition, there is undoubtedly a public interest in allowing public authorities to withhold information which, if disclosed, would negatively affect their ability to negotiate or to compete in a commercial environment.

Preserving the effectiveness of collaboration

- The disclosure could prejudice the open and collaborative nature of our arrangement. If organisations believe commercially sensitive information may be disclosed under FOIA, they may be less willing to engage openly.

Outcome

Whilst there is a recognised public interest in transparency and understanding the terms of agreements entered into by public authorities, there is greater weight in the public interest in protecting the commercial interests of both HMLR and Ordnance Survey. Disclosure of the redacted information would be likely to prejudice the negotiating position and inhibit the open and collaborative nature of similar arrangements. The public interest in accountability is met through disclosure of the remainder of the information.

Having considered the above we have concluded that it is not in the public interest to disclose the redacted information.

The information is therefore withheld under section 43(2) of FOIA.

Advice and assistance

Under Section 16 of FOIA and in accordance with the Section 45 code of practice, we have a duty to provide you with reasonable advice and assistance.

If you need any independent advice about individual's rights under information legislation, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The ICO is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest, promoting openness by public bodies and data privacy for individuals.

There is useful information on the ICO website which explains the rights of individuals:

www.ico.org.uk/for-the-public

Internal Review procedure

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request.



Requests for an internal review should be made within 40 working days from the date we have issued this response. In accordance with Section 45 FOIA code of practice (www.gov.uk/government/publications/freedom-of-information-code-of-practice) public authorities are not obliged to accept internal reviews after this period.

Please clearly indicate the reason(s) for requesting the review to assist in our investigation and review process, which will focus upon our handling of your request and whether HMLR has complied with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Requests for an independent internal review of your request should be made to:

Information Rights Team
HM Land Registry
Trafalgar House
1 Bedford Park
Croydon
CR0 2AQ

E-mail: foi@landregistry.gov.uk

If you are unhappy with other aspects of HM Land Registry's actions, please see our website for information on how to raise a concern or complaint:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/land-registry/about/complaints-procedure

Further rights of appeal exist to the Information Commissioner's Office under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 once the internal review process has been exhausted.

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

Telephone Helpline: 0303 123 1113
Website: www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints