



[REDACTED]

21 August 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00175**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 27 February. I extend my apologies for the significant delay in responding to your request.

**Your request:**

Please note that the clarifications you provided in your email of 13 April 2026 have been included in line with the relevant points in your request.

*Recent UKRI communications indicate a period of substantial reprioritisation across research infrastructures:*

- On 1 February 2026, UKRI Chief Executive Professor Sir Ian Chapman issued a [public letter](#)<sup>1</sup> outlining major changes to UKRI's investment approach, including pressures on STFC and a shift toward focused prioritisation.
- On 28 January 2026, Professor Michele Dougherty, Executive Chair of STFC, informed the PPAN community of significant reprioritisation in the PPAN portfolio, including reductions in grants and a transition to a more concentrated set of priorities.
- In a letter dated 19 December 2025, Professor Sir Ian Chapman informed UK collaborators in the LHCb Upgrade II project, the LHCb Collaboration management and the Director General of CERN that the LHCb2030+ Infrastructure project proposal had been deprioritised following a UKRI-wide assessment of Infrastructure Fund proposals after the government spending review. The letter states that this decision was taken by the UKRI Executive Committee to ensure alignment with UKRI's strategic investment priorities.

*Given the central role of the Infrastructure Advisory Committee (IAC) in these processes, I request the following.*

**1. IAC Recommendations (1 Jan 2025 – Present)**

*Please provide the full text of all:*

- IAC recommendations, advice papers, reports, or submissions to the UKRI Executive Committee, Executive Chairs, or UKRI Board;

*Clarifications: I request all IAC papers relating to all areas. This includes both all IAC papers relating to the 2025 LHCb Upgrade decision and all IAC papers relating to discussions not relating to the 2025 LHCb Upgrade decision. Although focus is on LHCb, it is important to see how these papers fit into overall picture of advice from IAC.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/news/open-letter-from-ian-chapman-to-research-and-innovation-community/>

- *Recommendations relating to:*
  - *Cross-UKRI infrastructure prioritisation*
  - *The reprioritisation processes described in the public UKRI letters cited above*
  - *STFC/PPAN infrastructure modelling*
  - *Decisions affecting CERN-associated or other international infrastructures*

*Clarifications:*

*The requested information relates to the IAC reprioritisation of bids and reprioritisation process in 2025. The request is to cover IAC discussions on the specific impacts of the reprioritisation on both STFC-wide and STFC-PPAN areas (where STFC-PPAN is not limited to LHCb). Request is to cover IAC discussions that have an impact on CERN-associated or other international infrastructures*

## *2. Inputs Used by the IAC*

*Please provide all evidence and materials used by the IAC in forming its recommendations, including:*

- *Evidence packs, briefing papers, financial projections, cost/risk models and data tables;*
- *Submissions from UKRI directorates, research councils (including STFC), external reviewers, or facilities;*
- *Options analyses, feasibility studies and impact assessments;*
- *Meeting papers, slide decks and preparatory documentation circulated to IAC members;*
- *External consultancy reports or benchmarking studies.*

*Clarification:*

*Scope of request is to include anything used by the IAC in any meeting that was in any way connected to the communications issued on 19 December 2025. This may cover inputs to more than one IAC meeting.*

## *3. Inputs and Advice Relating Specifically to the LHCb Upgrade II Decision*

*With reference to the decision communicated on 19 December 2025, please provide:*

- *All IAC assessments, comments, scoring matrices, advice notes, or recommendations relevant to LHCb Upgrade II;*
- *All inputs considered by the IAC or UKRI concerning LHCb Upgrade II, including:*
  - *Business-case assessments or reviews,*
  - *Cost and risk analyses,*
  - *Prioritisation or ranking models comparing LHCb Upgrade II with other*
  - *Infrastructure Fund proposals,*
  - *Documentation from the “exercise to review and reconsider all Infrastructure Fund proposals” referenced in the 19 December letter.*

## *4. Minutes, Notes and Covering Documents*

*Please provide:*

- *Minutes or summaries of IAC meetings where infrastructure prioritisation was discussed;*
- *Covering notes or internal UKRI papers accompanying IAC advice when passed to decision-making bodies;*
- *Papers considered by the UKRI Executive Committee relating to infrastructure reprioritisation (including decisions on LHCb Upgrade II).*

*Clarifications:*

*Scope of request is to include:*

- *IAC meetings leading up to the communications of 19 December 2025*
- *IAC advice arising from any meetings leading up to the communications of 19 December 2025*
- *The December 2025 ExCo meeting considering the outputs of the most recent IAC (may be more than one meeting)*

## *5. Timing and Communications Strategy Concerning the 19 December 2025 Letter*

*Given that the 19 December 2025 LHCb Upgrade II letter was issued immediately before the Christmas period, I request:*

### *5.1 Timing of the decision and letter*

*The internal timeline for:*

- *When the LHCb Upgrade II decision was taken,*
- *When it was approved for communication,*
- *When the communication was drafted, finalised and authorised for release.*

### *5.2 Communications strategy and policy compliance*

*Any internal guidance, instructions, policy documents, or analyses considered by UKRI in deciding:*

- *The timing of the 19 December 2025 communication,*
- *Whether issuing the letter immediately before the Christmas break was evaluated in terms of public transparency obligations.*

### *5.3 Consistency with government communications principles*

*Any documents relating to:*

- *UKRI's obligations under UK Government communications standards, including principles against attempting to "bury bad news" through timing of releases,*
- *Communications advice received from UKRI's communications directorate, BEIS/DSIT, or Cabinet Office communications teams, where relevant,*
- *Assessments of whether the timing of the 19 December communication was consistent with these standards.*

### *5.3 Clarifications:*

*Scope of request is to include:*

- *Any specific documentation and how it was applied/compliance checks relevant to the recent infrastructure decisions communicated late afternoon on Friday 19 December 2025.*
- *Any specific communications on the recent Infrastructure decisions*

*For clarity, this request is not asserting impropriety: it seeks documentation of the process, reasoning and compliance checks underlying the timing of the communication.*

### *6. Guidance from ExCo to UKRI*

*I would like to obtain all advice, briefings, reports, communications, meeting notes, recommendations, or decision-related documents provided by the Cabinet Office Executive Committee (ExCo) to UKRI.*

*Clarification: request is for UKRI Executive Committee, not Cabinet Office.*

*Please include any such material:*

- *Provided directly by ExCo members, the ExCo secretariat, or officials acting on behalf of ExCo*
- *Sent to UKRI as written advice, guidance, direction, or policy interpretation*
- *Shared during meetings, consultations, correspondence, or cross-government working groups*

## **Our response**

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does hold information relevant to your request. Please see the information below and attached.

Please note that some of the information in scope of your request has been withheld or redacted as exemptions under the FOI were considered to apply. These are listed as follows and further details on these exemptions are provided later in this response:

- Section 31 – law enforcement
- Section 36 – prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs
- Section 40 – personal information
- Section 41 – information provided in confidence
- Section 43 – commercial interests

## 1. IAC Recommendations (1 Jan 2025 – Present)

The Infrastructure Advisory Committee (IAC) recommendation to the UKRI Executive Chair was recorded in the IAC November 2025 minutes.

The following document is provided with this response; some information has been redacted as exemptions are considered to apply as referenced:

- *FOI2026\_00175 01. IAC November 2025 Minutes\_Redacted*  
Exemptions applied: 36(2)(b)(i), (ii) & (c), 40(2), 41(1), 43(2)

The minutes for the November 2025 IAC meeting were signed off at the following IAC meeting in March 2026.

Information was also identified as within scope of your request concerning recommendations relating to cross-UKRI infrastructure prioritisation, the reprioritisation processes described in public letters, and decisions affecting CERN-associated or other international processes. These recommendations are noted within UKRI Executive Committee papers and minutes, which have been withheld under Section 36(2)(b)(i), (2)(b)(ii), and (2)(c).

Please note that:

- The IAC only advised on decisions that relate to the UKRI Infrastructure Fund
- STFC and PPAN (Particle Physics, Astronomy and Nuclear Physics) infrastructure modelling does not form part of the IAC process, therefore there are no papers to the IAC on this topic

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July UKRI published an STFC prioritisation outcomes explainer, available [here](#)<sup>2</sup>. Although this does not cover the Infrastructure Fund specifically, as this is a central UKRI budget, it does give wider context which may be helpful.

## 2. Inputs used by the IAC

Please see the response to Q1 with respect to IAC meeting papers detailing IAC discussion.

Further information within the scope of your request consists of a variety of inputs used by the IAC. The IAC perform a peer review function and assess proposals, therefore when considering all papers provided at the IAC meeting relating to all areas, it has been determined that some information should be withheld or redacted under exemptions of the FOIA; these are explained in more detail further below.

The following documents are provided with this response; some information has been redacted as exemptions are considered to apply as referenced:

- *FOI2026\_00175 02. 1125-01 IAC November 2025 Agenda\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 40(2), 43(2)
- *FOI2026\_00175 03. 1125-02 Draft minutes of the IAC March 2025 meeting\_Redacted*  
Exemptions engaged: 36(2)(b)(i), (ii) & (c), 40(2), and 41(1)
- *FOI2026\_00175 04. 1125-08 Infrastructure Fund Completions September 2025\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 31(1)(a), 36(2)(b)(i), 41(1), 43(2)
- *FOI2026\_00175 05. 1125-09 UKRI DRI Update Oct 2025\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 40(2)
- *FOI2026\_00175 06. Annex 1 Wave 4 Project Descriptions\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 36(2)(b)(ii), 41(1), 43(2)
- *FOI2026\_00175 07. Summary of Proposals Table\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 36(2)(c) and 41(1)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/publications/explainer-stfc-prioritisation-outcomes/explainer-stfc-prioritisation-outcomes-2026-to-2030/>

- *FOI2026\_00175 13. IAC Evaluation Guidance - Full Projects & Prelim Activities 2025\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 31(1)(a), 36(2)(c), 40(2), 41(1), 43(2)
- *FOI2026\_00175 14. Email to Infrastructure Advisory Committee ahead of meeting\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 31(1)(a) and 40(2)

Other information provided to the IAC ahead of the meeting has been identified as within scope, however this has been withheld from disclosure under sections 36 and 43. This contains detailed information on specific projects, where disclosure would negatively impact UKRI's ability to make appropriately informed decisions regarding funding priorities, and would also harm the commercial interests of the projects and organisations involved and UKRI's relationships with third parties.

Ahead of the meeting, the IAC were informed about the process required and this was communicated by individual emails to the IAC membership. A redacted version of the IAC guidance is provided as document "13", and the email correspondence provided in document "14" was shared with the Chair of the IAC.

No information is held on options analysis, feasibility studies, external consultancy or bench marking studies.

### *3. Inputs and Advice Relating Specifically to the LHCb Upgrade II Decision*

Information related to the Large Hadron Collider beauty (LHCb) Upgrade II Decision is included in the documents listed above, namely documents 01, 06, 07 and 14.

The business case for LHCb II Upgrade project has not been finalised or assessed. Therefore, beyond a recognition that the project required further approvals before it could be commenced, information of this nature was not used by the IAC or UKRI.

It has been determined that information relating to cost and risk analyses, prioritisation or ranking models comparing LHCb Upgrade II, and Infrastructure Fund proposals are confidential parts of the peer review process. This information has been withheld from disclosure under sections 36(2)(b)(ii) and (c) and 43(2) as disclosure would negatively impact UKRI's ability to make decisions regarding funding priorities and would also harm the commercial interests of the projects involved and UKRI's relationships with third parties.

In regard to your request for documentation from the "*exercise to review and reconsider all Infrastructure Fund proposals*" referenced in the 19 December letter, this is provided in the responses above to Q1 and Q2.

### *4. Minutes, Notes and Covering Documents*

- *Minutes or summaries of IAC meetings where infrastructure prioritisation was discussed;*

The minutes of the November 2025 IAC meeting, where LHCb Phase II Upgrade was discussed have been provided within the response to Q1. Aside from the minutes of the IAC meeting, no further notes are held by UKRI.

You may note that the recording of meetings is referenced within the minutes, however, these recordings are stored for a limited time to support the preparation of minutes. Once the minutes have been created the recordings are deleted, therefore this information is no longer held.

In regard to the other points noted in this part of your request:

- *Covering notes or internal UKRI papers accompanying IAC advice when passed to decision-making bodies;*
- *Papers considered by the UKRI Executive Committee relating to infrastructure reprioritisation (including decisions on LHCb Upgrade II).*

The only decision-making body for UKRI's Infrastructure Fund is UKRI Executive Committee. One document has been identified as within scope of this part of your request, however, this has been withheld from disclosure under section 36(2)(b)(i) and (c).

There are no other covering notes or internal papers.

## *5. Timing and Communications Strategy Concerning the 19 December 2025 Letter*

### *5.1 Timing of the decision and letter*

*The internal timeline for:*

- *When the LHCb Upgrade II decision was taken,*
- *When it was approved for communication,*
- *When the communication was drafted, finalised and authorised for release.*

The timeline below was provided to UKRI's Executive Committee on 16 December. The aim was to share decisions on 17 or 18 December, with communications finalised over those two days. The Committee requested Ministerial clearance, and approval was received later than anticipated and therefore decisions were communicated on 19 December.

Communications Timeline:

| <b>Date</b>  | <b>Outcome/Action</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 Dec       | Scenarios shown to UKRI Research Council Infrastructure Leads                                                                                                                                              |
| 16 Dec       | UKRI Executive Committee decision<br>DSIT International Infrastructure team alert Science and Innovation Network (SIN)<br>North America team and Europe/USA DSIT leads                                     |
| 17 Dec       | ExCo meeting outcome shared confidentially with UKRI Research Council Infrastructure Leads<br>Reactive lines to take and FAQs shared with UKRI Research Council Infrastructure leads and UKRI Central team |
| 17 or 18 Dec | Formal outcome letters sent to Project Leads                                                                                                                                                               |

Copies of internal communications relevant to this part of your request are provided with this response; some information has been redacted as exemptions are considered to apply as referenced:

- *FOI2026\_00175 11. Comms cascade - LHCb\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 31(1)(a) and 40(2)
- *FOI2026\_00175 12. Comms cascade - EIC\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 31(1)(a) and 40(2)

### *5.2 Communications strategy and policy compliance*

*Any internal guidance, instructions, policy documents, or analyses considered by UKRI in deciding:*

- *The timing of the 19 December 2025 communication,*
- *Whether issuing the letter immediately before the Christmas break was evaluated in terms of public transparency obligations.*

The decision was made to communicate decisions quickly after they were made on 16 December to avoid a loss of information security over the following 3 weeks, until return to the office on 5 January. The communications timeline is provided in the response to Q5.

While no formal risk assessment or analysis was undertaken, an impact assessment on the communications themselves, which was separate from the impact of not proceeding with these projects, was co-developed and shared with UKRI's External Affairs and Communications team, and the UKRI Executive Committee.

The following documents are provided with this response; some information has been redacted as exemptions are considered to apply as referenced:

- *FOI2026\_00175 08. Comms Impact Assessment as of 16 Dec\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 40(2)
- *FOI2026\_00175 09. Re\_ InfraFund Update & Contacts over Christmas\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 40(2)
- *FOI2026\_00175 10. RE\_ Plan B - IF Decisions\_Redacted*  
Exemptions: 40(2) and 31(1)(a)

### 5.3 Consistency with government communications principles

Any documents relating to:

- *UKRI's obligations under UK Government communications standards, including principles against attempting to "bury bad news" through timing of releases,*
- *Communications advice received from UKRI's communications directorate, BEIS/DSIT, or Cabinet Office communications teams, where relevant,*
- *Assessments of whether the timing of the 19 December communication was consistent with these standards.*

UKRI does not have formal principles around the timing of communications. However, no communications were shared without first the seeking of advice from UKRI's External Affairs and Communications team. With the decision being taken on 16 December, the aim was to communicate all decisions as quickly as possible in a coordinated manner to minimise the likelihood of an impact on information security over the Christmas period. Following a meeting, email correspondence was sent to confirm the preferred plan and an alternative plan if Ministerial approval to communicate decisions was not received on 19 December.

- Document "09" provided above contains correspondence confirming plans, which included having contacts available to answer questions between 19 December and 5 January, and the existence of a mitigation plan.
- Document "10" provides more detail about the mitigation plan communicated by email.

In addition, communication cascade plans were developed with those for the Electron-Ion Collider (EIC) and LHCb Update II, the two international projects, and have been provided above at 5.1 as documents "11" and "12".

No formal assessments around timings were undertaken, but risk assessments around the communication of decisions were, and are provided at 5.2 as document "08". Correspondence was also identified involving advice from the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), UKRI's sponsor department (now the Department for Business, Innovation, Science and Trade) as within scope of your request, however this has been withheld from disclosure under section 41(1) as it was shared with UKRI under an expectation of confidentiality.

### 6. Guidance from ExCo to UKRI

You have requested all advice, briefings, reports, communications, meeting notes, recommendations, or decision-related documents provided by the UKRI Executive Committee (ExCo) to UKRI, with the additional following material:

- *Provided directly by ExCo members, the ExCo secretariat, or officials acting on behalf of ExCo*
- *Sent to UKRI as written advice, guidance, direction, or policy interpretation*
- *Shared during meetings, consultations, correspondence, or cross-government working groups*

The information within scope for this part of your request comprises an Executive Committee paper prepared to support UKRI decision making. This has been withheld from disclosure under section 36(2)(b)(i) and (2)(c) as this paper constitutes advice and briefing information that is essential for internal decision making.

In addition, some correspondence between the Executive Committee Chair and the Infrastructure Programme Director contains information in scope of your request. This has also been withheld from disclosure under the same exemptions, as disclosure would prohibit the free and frank exchange of advice and would otherwise prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

### **Exemptions engaged:**

#### **Section 31(1)(a) – Law enforcement**

Some of the information within scope contained system links or email addresses intended for internal UKRI operations only. These have been redacted as we have determined that disclosure would prejudice the prevention or detection of crime as per section 31(1)(a) of the FOIA. However, we believe the redaction of this information does not detract from the content or understanding of the information.

Section 31(1)(a) is a qualified exemption and therefore subject to a public interest test. UKRI applied the Public Interest Test to this request as set out below:

#### **Public interest in favour of disclosure:**

- There is a public interest in favour of the release of the information, to uphold the principles of transparency and accountability.

#### **Public interest in favour of withholding the information**

- The release of this information would make UKRI more vulnerable to crime, specifically a malicious attack on UKRI's computer infrastructure and systems.
- There is an overwhelming public interest in keeping public authority computer systems secure, which would be served by non-disclosure.
- We believe that disclosing this information would not provide any material benefit or greater insight into the information already being disclosed in this response.

UKRI has therefore reached the conclusion that, on balance, the public interest is better served by redacting and withholding the selected information under section 31(1)(a).

#### **Section 36 – prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs**

It is considered that the following exemptions under section 36 of the FOIA apply to information within the scope of your request:

- Section 36(2)(b)(i) is considered to apply where disclosure would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank provision of advice.
- Section 36(2)(b)(ii) is considered to apply where disclosure would, or would be likely to, inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation.
- Section 36(2)(c) is also considered to apply where disclosure would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs.

For section 36, the opinion of UKRI's Chief Executive Officer, as UKRI's Qualified Person, was sought on engaging this exemption and the level of prejudice. As this is a qualified exemption, we were then required to consider the public interest both in favour of, and against, releasing the information.

## Outcome of consideration of Section 36 – Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs.

UKRI's Qualified Person confirmed their opinion that the above-named sections of the FOIA would be engaged, as in order to make decisions regarding investments, UKRI routinely seeks expert input from independent experts. It is important that those experts feel their advice is held in confidence in order that they give free and frank input to the decision-making process. Therefore, UKRI needs to keep a safe space for such advice or else we would not get unequivocal and uninhibited advice. Additionally, disclosure of this information would also make it more challenging in recruiting suitably qualified and expert individuals to serve on advisory committees.

As section 36 is a qualified exemption, a test was required to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs public interest in disclosure. The public interest test was conducted by a senior manager, who was not directly involved in the matters that were the subject of your request.

### Public interest in favour of disclosure:

- There is a general public interest in maintaining openness and transparency around meetings with key stakeholders.
- Disclosure of this information may increase transparency in UKRI processes and decisions.

### Public interest in favour of withholding the information:

- Withholding the relevant information from disclosure is important to UKRI's ability to protect the safe space for purposes of deliberation and discussions with advisory bodies, and to enable councils to freely and frankly debate options in order for UKRI to make effective and informed decisions on prioritisation and future funding plans.
- The IAC recommends an Infrastructure Fund portfolio comprised of projects that are timebound investments enabling a step-change in research and innovation capability, including new infrastructure, major upgrades, repurposing, transformative developments, and decommissioning. UKRI requires a 'safe space' to discuss and determine the best, agreed way forward, and disclosing this information would undermine the ability of UKRI to develop plans across disciplines.
- Without this protected safe space, there is a significant risk that strategic funding decisions, which are informed by the IAC's recommendations and advice, would be substantially less well-informed and limited to the detriment of UKRI.
- The work of the IAC is ongoing, with members serving for up to three years and the most recent members having been appointed in March 2026.
- Disclosure at the current time would materially impact this process where a safe space is needed to support continuing deliberations, and would be damaging to current and proposed partnerships on international partnerships and international activities.
- UKRI is also mindful of the "chilling effect" that could occur from disclosure of views and advice that has been shared with UKRI under an expectation of confidence; without this protected safe space, the chilling effect would significantly increase the risk that funding decisions would be substantially less well-informed, therefore hindering the effective operation of this process, which is crucial to the effective conduct of public affairs.
- Panel members were asked to provide independent, candid advice based on access to sensitive organisational information. Submissions and evidence were provided in confidence to inform deliberations, and the process relies on maintaining a trusted environment that supports full and frank contributions.

Overall, UKRI considers that on this occasion the public interest is best served by maintaining the exemption, and therefore the relevant information has been withheld from disclosure.

## **Section 40 – personal information**

The names and contact details of individuals are considered to be exempt from disclosure under section 40(2) of the FOIA. Disclosing this information would contravene the first Data Protection Principle as defined under Section 86 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

Section 40(2) of the FOIA has not been applied to the names of senior officials appearing in *Documents 01, 02 and 03*. The individuals concerned hold sufficiently senior roles within the organisation and it is reasonable to disclose their names in connection with their official duties and responsibilities.

## **Section 41 – information provided in confidence**

It has been determined that some of the information requested falls under section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence. To explain further, some of the requested information has been provided by third parties under an expectation of confidence such as details of projects from the project leads to aid decision making around prioritisation, and inputs from other Government departments. If the information was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality.

Section 41 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

## **Section 43 – commercial interests**

It is considered that some of the information is also subject to Section 43(2) of the FOIA. This exemption is used where disclosure would likely result in a person's (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entities) commercial interests being prejudiced.

This is a qualified exemption, and a test was carried out to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs public interest in disclosure.

### Public interest in favour of disclosure

- There is a general public interest in the disclosure of this information to ensure transparency and openness of a public organisation.
- There is also a public interest in transparency in order to ensure the accountability of public organisations in how public funding is allocated, and to provide further context to other information published by UKRI relating to financial allocations.
- It would be in the public interest to view the information which provided a point in time position on the ongoing prioritisation exercise which may enable the public, partners and other interested parties to independently assess the impact of the exercise.

### Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- Disclosure at the present time would be detrimental to the interests of UKRI, by jeopardising the prioritisation exercise and the disclosure of incomplete information relating to options and scenarios for specific investments that are not final or contextualised. Premature disclosure could damage specific investments, facilities and partnerships, and impact stakeholder confidence in a way that is disproportionate or misleading.
- For programmes and investments supported in partnership with other bodies, in the UK and internationally, disclosure at the present time could adversely affect relationships with other funders, partners and collaborators, which may result in risks to the continuation of partnership funding, the level of support, or impact UKRI's position in partnership negotiations.

- Where the information directly relates to STFC facilities, collaborations and partnerships, in addition to the points above, disclosure would be detrimental to current commercial activities, including services provided by STFC and access to facilities.
- Peer review proposals that are in scope of your request contain commercially sensitive information which are disclosed to UKRI in confidence. Releasing information provided in confidence is likely to damage the possibility of ongoing relationships with other organisations. Relationships may become untenable if third parties cannot be certain that their commercial information will remain confidential when held by UKRI.
- Breaching the commercial interest may also adversely affect future negotiation opportunities for UKRI. UKRI may be seen as a 'confidentiality' risk if it routinely releases information relating to the prioritisation exercise into the public domain, particularly where this is third party information.
- We also considered the impact on UKRI if commercially sensitive information relating to bodies we engage and work closely with were disclosed. We believe it would damage the trust in UKRI and likely impact our ability to carry out our role and manage our current and future investments.

Taking these issues into consideration, it was concluded that the commercial sensitivity arguments outweigh the public interest in disclosure at this time. This takes account of information published by UKRI relating to financial allocations, such as the budget explainer and information on the ongoing prioritisation exercise.

## Your rights

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance  
Email: [foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org)

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints procedure](#)<sup>3</sup>.

Yours sincerely,

  
Information Governance  
Information Rights Team  
UK Research and Innovation  
[foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org) | [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>