



[REDACTED]

11 September 2026

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00582

Thank you for your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request received on the 11 July, and subsequent clarifications narrowing the scope of the request, received on the 6 August and 2 September.

Your request:

I would like to request the following information held by UKRI/STFC:

- 1. All documentation, papers, and briefings prepared for or considered as part of the STFC prioritisation exercise conducted in 2026 (the process leading to the announced £162 million savings programme by 2029-30), including but not limited to options papers, impact assessments, and scenario/modelling documents.*
- 2. All agendas, papers, and minutes of STFC Council and any related committee or board meetings at which the prioritisation exercise, its options, or its outcomes were discussed, from January 2026 to the date of this request.*
- 3. For each set of minutes referred to in item 2, all draft versions produced prior to the final approved version, together with any tracked changes, revision logs, or records showing what amendments were made between drafts and by whom.*
- 4. Any correspondence between STFC/UKRI and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) relating to the prioritisation exercise or its outcomes during the same period.*

Your clarification:

Thank you for your response and for the helpful context on the scope of the STFC prioritisation activity. I would like to refine my request as follows, focusing solely on STFC Council.

I would like to request:

- 1. The agendas and papers [that related to and mention the prioritisation activity] for all STFC Council meetings held in 2026 to date at which the prioritisation activity, its options, or its outcomes were discussed or presented, including any recommendations submitted to Council by the Science Board (PPAN), Science Board for Facilities and Laboratories (F&L), or the cross-UKRI Strategic Facilities Advisory Group.*
- 2. The minutes of those same Council meetings.*

If, having reviewed the above, it is possible to do so without exceeding the appropriate cost limit under Section 12 of the FOIA, I would also like to request:

- 3. Any earlier draft versions of the minutes at item 2, together with any record of substantive changes made between drafts and the final approved version.*

I am not requesting correspondence between UKRI/STFC and DSIT, or documentation from the PPAN and F&L boards and their sub-committees, at this stage.

Our response:

Firstly, we would like to apologise for the delay in our response. Due to the high levels of interest in the STFC prioritisation activity, we have received a significant number of requests on this topic, which has unfortunately affected our FOI processing and response times.

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

2026 meetings of the STFC Council were held on the following dates:

- 14 & 15 January 2026
- 12 March 2026
- 13 & 14 May 2026
- 9 June 2026
- 16 July 2026

Under Section 21 of the FOIA, information already reasonably accessible, the minutes for the January and March 2026 meetings are already available in the public domain via the [STFC Council meeting minutes page](#)¹.

Section 21 is an absolute exemption which means that there is no requirement to conduct a public interest test.

The minutes for the May, June and July 2026 meetings are exempt from disclosure under Section 22(1) of the FOIA as they are intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption meaning that it is subject to the public interest test.

UKRI understand that being transparent in regard to research council meetings is in the public interest. However, STFC Council minutes are published once approved and prepared for public release. We consider that premature release would put undue pressure on UKRI to publish outside of our scheduled timeframes which would lead to a disproportionate burden on the organisation. This would not be in the public interest.

We have therefore determined that the outcome of this test is that the public interest is insufficient to justify immediate disclosure. Minutes from the May and June meetings are expected to be available by the end of September, and the July meeting by the end of October, subject to Council approval, from the link provided above.

We estimate that the cost of complying with the remainder of your request would exceed the appropriate limit set out in the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

We have therefore refused points 1 and 3 of your request under section 12(1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Section 12 of the FOIA allows a public authority to refuse a request where it estimates that the cost of complying with the request, or in the case of section 12(2), confirming or denying whether information is held, would exceed the prescribed limit.

For UKRI, the appropriate limit is £450, equivalent to 18 hours of staff time, calculated at the statutory rate of £25 per hour.

When estimating whether the cost limit would be exceeded, a public authority may take into account one or more of the following activities:

- determining whether information is held;
- locating the information;
- retrieving the information; and
- extracting the requested information.

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/publications/stfc-council-meeting-minutes/>

It may be helpful to explain why UKRI estimates that responding to your request would exceed the appropriate limit.

Approximately four hours of staff time has been spent locating, retrieving and extracting the relevant agendas, minutes and papers for these meetings.

The format STFC Council meetings follow is not uniform, and the number of papers produced for each varies significantly. Across the five meetings, more than 70 documents have been identified. Each would need to be reviewed to determine whether it contains information relating to the STFC prioritisation exercise. The papers also vary considerably in size and, collectively, comprise more than 700 pages that would need to be reviewed to identify information falling within scope of the request.

We estimate that this would require an additional 70 hours, significantly exceeding the statutory limit of 18 hours.

This estimate does not take into account the additional time it would take to locate and retrieve draft versions of the minutes for each meeting that may be held across multiple sources.

UKRI therefore estimates that the work required would exceed the appropriate limit and has refused your request under section 12(1) of the FOIA.

Advice and assistance

Under section 16 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, UKRI has a duty to provide advice and assistance, so far as it is reasonable to do so.

Whilst UKRI is unable to comply with your request in its current form, it may be possible for us to comply with a revised request seeking a narrower category of information. As a starting point, you may wish to review the available minutes, or request copies of the agendas of relevant meetings. These records may assist you in identifying particular topics, decisions or discussion points that are of interest, which could help you narrow the scope of any subsequent request and avoid exceeding the appropriate limit.

Any revised request will be considered on its own merits and will be subject to the provisions of the FOIA, including the application of any relevant exemptions.

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

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.

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](#)².

² <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>

Yours sincerely,



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