



[REDACTED]

30 October 2026

Dear [REDACTED],

Internal Review request: IR2026/00700

Thank you for your Internal Review request received on the 08 August 2026 in which you asked us to reconsider our response to your request, FOI2026/00494.

In your email you have requested the following:

I am writing to request an internal review of UK Research and Innovation's handling of my FOI request 'ATI Review'.

In your request, you went on to state why you felt that UKRI had incorrectly applied the exemptions and why the Public Interest Test should find in favour of disclosing the requested information.

Our response

In considering this review I have reviewed your request and the issues you have raised in this Internal Review request.

In your original request you asked:

Please provide me under the FOI Act a copy of the review referenced in this April 2026 post about the ATI (<https://www.ukri.org/news/review-to-help-shape-next-phase-of-the-alan-turing-institute/>)

I have taken a fresh look at your request for information and outline my response to your questions below. Where exemptions have been identified I set out the sections of FOIA which apply, as they relate to each part of your request. Then I address below how I consider those sections apply to the review at the end. Information on the approach and history of the mid-term review is also provided for context.

Having reviewed the information and undertaken internal and external consultation I can confirm that the previous position to withhold this information under Sections 36 and 43 of the FOI Act 2000 is upheld.

Mid-term review status and timelines

The mid-term review is currently in progress and is expected to conclude in early 2027. The news item published on UKRI's website in April 2026 identified that the review had been conducted and that UKRI and the ATI were working together to implement the recommendations made. This process described as involving UKRI and the ATI working together is still ongoing and includes a response from the ATI to UKRI and further meetings of the panel, before a final report is produced. UKRI are planning to publish the final report, which will include the outcomes of the discussion with the ATI in early 2027. Therefore, whilst the initial stage of the review has been completed, the full process relating to it is still underway, and we apologise that this was not clear from the published news item and was not explained clearly in our previous response.

Information relating to the applied exemptions

Section 36 – Prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs

For the information where Section 36 was considered, 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.

The outcome of consideration of Section 36 (2)(b)(ii) and Section 36(2)(c) – Prejudice to the effective conduct of public affairs, was that the exemption was engaged as disclosure of this information at this time would inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation and therefore prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs.

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

- The ATI is in receipt of £100m over 5 years (April 2024-March 2029) of public money administered via UKRI, and is a high-profile research institute in the UK that has been in the press for multiple reasons since July 2025. We recognise that this prominence attracts public interest in funding and other arrangements.
- Preliminary findings from the review have been published¹, and disclosure of this information would provide additional context to support the article.
- UKRI, as a Non-Department Public Body has an obligation to be open and transparent about its funding and review processes, to be publicly accountable.
- UKRI has an obligation to demonstrate that its administering of public funds to support research and innovation is effective, again to be publicly accountable.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- The mid-term review process is ongoing. Discussions between the ATI and UKRI have been taking place and the panel has been reconvened. Disclosure of related information currently:
 - Would interrupt the process, inhibiting officials and advisers from expressing frank or exploratory views. Participants may become more guarded or self-censoring if they expect drafts or informal exchanges to be made public. Premature disclosure would reduce candor, and undermine robust policy development, leading to poorer-quality decisions.
 - Could lead to misinterpretation, premature conclusions and unintended influence on outcomes. It may also mislead stakeholders, employees of the ATI, and the public, causing unnecessary concern. Disclosure could also affect negotiations, partnerships, or stakeholder engagement.
- It is important for UKRI to enable those it funds to be able to operate fairly in the competitive public and commercial research and innovation funding environment. Disclosure of sensitive information would place the ATI at a disadvantage compared to other organisations. This in turn would affect UKRI's investment in the ATI.
- A safe space to debate options, fully and rigorously, free from immediate external pressure or misinterpretation is needed to support the ATI's response to this review. With an ongoing issue, positions can be fluid and not settled. Disclosure now risks premature external scrutiny before conclusions are reached.
- Panel members were asked to provide independent, candid advice based on access to sensitive organisational information.
- Submissions and evidence from the ATI were provided in confidence to inform deliberations, and the process relies on maintaining a trusted environment that supports full and frank contributions.

¹ [Review to help shape next phase of The Alan Turing Institute – UKRI](#)

- It is essential to protect the safe space for deliberation, and stakeholder input and advice, to support effective funding decisions. The disclosure of this information and the views provided would have a ‘chilling effect’, thus reducing the timeliness and candour of discussions and inhibit the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation. Without this protected safe space, the chilling effect would significantly increase the risk that funding decisions and review outcomes would be substantially less well-informed, therefore hindering the effective operation of this process, which is crucial to the effective conduct of public affairs.
- Publication of this type of information regarding this matter could interfere with future review processes as participants may alter their behaviour in expectation of their contributions being disclosed. Thus affecting the effectiveness of future reviews of UKRI’s large investments.
- Further publication of information is planned which will meet UKRI’s obligations regarding transparency.

At this point in time, the public interest is better served by not disclosing this information.

Section 43 – Commercial interests

We believe the information you have requested falls under the scope of Section 43(2) of the FOI Act 2000. This exemption is used where disclosure would likely result in the person’s (an individual, a company, the public authority itself, or any other legal entities) commercial interests would be prejudiced.

Section 43 is a qualified, prejudiced-based 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

- The ATI is in receipt of £100m over 5 years (April 2024-March 2029) of public money administered via UKRI, and is a high-profile research institute in the UK that has been in the press for multiple reasons since July 2025. We recognise that this prominence attracts public interest in funding and other arrangements.
- Preliminary findings from the review have been published², and disclosure of this information would provide additional context to support the article.
- UKRI, as a Non-Department Public Body has an obligation to be open and transparent about its funding and review processes, to be publicly accountable.
- UKRI has an obligation to demonstrate that its administering of public funds to support research and innovation is effective, again to be publicly accountable.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- Key information relating to the findings of the review at this point have been published. Further information relating to the activities of the ATI are due to be published shortly in its Annual Report.
- UKRI should support the ATI to work with its partners in a fair and competitive way, without the disclosure of information that could give an advantage to their competitors.
- Detailed disclosure of information included within the findings of the report could materially affect the ATI’s relationships with partners and suppliers. This could undermine the ATI’s ability to compete for contracts, collaborations or future funding.
- Interim review findings may highlight risks, uncertainties, or performance concerns that are not final or contextualised. Premature disclosure could damage reputation and stakeholder confidence in a way that is disproportionate or misleading.
- Disclosure of incomplete review material could adversely affect relationships with other funders and collaborators. If funders perceive heightened risk based on incomplete review material, they may withdraw or reduce support.
- We also considered the impact on UKRI if commercially sensitive information relating to the organisations 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.

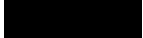
² [Review to help shape next phase of The Alan Turing Institute – UKRI](#)

At this point in time, the public interest is better served by not disclosing this information.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. 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](#)³.

Yours sincerely,


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Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org

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