



Ref: FOI2024-024

[REDACTED]

14th May 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Further to our previous correspondence regarding your request for the following information:

Spend on Office supplies and associated products for the below financial years.

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Start date & duration of Contract?

Is there an extension clause in the contract and, if so, the duration of the extension?

Has a decision been made yet on whether the contract is to be either extended or renewed?

Who is the senior officer (outside of procurement) responsible for the contract?

Name of Incumbent Supplier?

How long have you traded with them?

If you publish your register of contracts and purchasing, can you please provide a website link.

In addition, can you confirm if you have a contract in place for Tail End Spend.

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). A search for the requested information within the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) has now been completed, and we can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held. We will address each of your points in turn:

The Spend on Office supplies and associated products for the below financial years are as follows:

1st April 2022 – 31st March 2023 - £52k

1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 - £265k

Under Section 16, advice and assistance, it may be helpful to note that some items have been miscategorised under the stationary spend and this accounts for an added increase. Other fluctuation factors can include:

- Number of people on site, there was a drop after Covid and then an increase as people returned to site, this still fluctuates.
- A drop as people adjust to hybrid working – not printing as many things, or using as many notebooks, physical diaries no longer ordered automatically only on request.
- We have a number of stationery cupboards, the Local Help Points are responsible for stocking these so we quite often see an increase when they have a full restock across site.
- Engagement Survey – there is quite often a spike in spend in the summer during the engagement workshops of flipcharts, post it notes etc.



- Campaigns on site – if there is a campaign on site requiring lots of posters, banners etc then we will see a spike that month too.

Start date & duration of Contract?

Current Contract started 01-04-24 to 31-03-26

Is there an extension clause in the contract and, if so, the duration of the extension?

There are 2x +1 options on this contract following the initial term.

Has a decision been made yet on whether the contract is to be either extended or renewed?

No Information held

Who is the senior officer (outside of procurement) responsible for the contract?

Section 40(2) provides that information is exempt if it is the personal data of an individual other than the requester. The Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) are obliged to comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR and as such are prohibited from disclosing personal data to third parties where doing so would breach the data protection principles set out in the UK GDPR. Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and as such does not require a Public Interest Test to be carried out

Name of Incumbent Supplier?

How long have you traded with them?

We are withholding the information to the above points under Section 43(2) which is a qualified exemption and so is subject to the Public Interest Test (PIT).

We will now set out arguments for and against disclosure in terms of the public interest, along with the reasons for our conclusion.

Section 43

Section 43(2) is applicable to some of the information requested, because disclosure under the Act would or would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it). This is because of the very specialist nature of the work that some of our suppliers do for us and the limited number of parties there are in this space. There is a risk that giving an indication of who the suppliers are and the length of the contract, that this could be used by competitors to our commercial partners to undercut them. We therefore consider there is a risk to their commercial interests.

We appreciate that this exemption is qualified on the basis of the public interest test. We have considered that there is public interest in revealing the scale of expenditure and those companies that engage in business with the public authority must expect a greater degree of openness.

However, there is a public interest in a healthy and competitive market place which would be threatened by loss of trust if suppliers fear the disclosure of the nature of the pricing and length of contracts by public authorities or by undermining the competitiveness of companies by publicising commercial information. The release of this information would be prejudicial to both AWE and their suppliers' commercial interests by exposing commercial data to competitors who could use this as a basis to undercut our commercial partners.



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On balance, due to the specialist nature of some of AWE suppliers, the balance weighs in the favour of withholding the information insofar as it relates to certain commercial partners and would be prejudicial to both AWE and suppliers.

If you publish your register of contracts and purchasing, can you please provide a website link.

No information held, under Section 16, advice and assistance it may be helpful to note that this is not published.

In addition, can you confirm if you have a contract in place for Tail End Spend.

All our office supplies and associated products are caught under this contract.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications. If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you are unhappy with the way your request has been handled you have a right to request an internal review within 40 days of receiving this letter, by writing to information.requests@awe.co.uk or our postal address: Information Requests Team, AWE Aldermaston, Reading, RG7 4PR. If you are still unhappy after an internal review has been completed, under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 you have the right to take your complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office. Please note the Commissioner will generally not consider a complaint until you have exhausted AWE's internal complaints process.

Yours sincerely,

AWE Information Requests Team