

Ref: FOI2024- 046

request-1173074-b3f88bc0@whatdotheyknow.com

09 October 2024

Dear Mr Pashby,

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

*Please will you share with me information you have about the recent (2023/2024) rebrand of AWE?
Information including any presentations, brand books, brand guides, and house styles.*

*In addition, please will you share how much was spent on the rebrand including any breakdowns of costs
where available, and the name of the organisation(s) which provided the rebrand.*

Your request has been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

We can confirm that AWE holds all of the information you have requested, however we are withholding the information under section 43(2) of the FOI Act.

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption subject to a Public Interest Test (PIT) which means that the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

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(2) – Commercial Prejudice

Section 43(2) provides that information can be withheld where disclosure of the information would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation (including the public authority holding it).

The factors in favour of disclosure of the information would be to provide openness and transparency in public spending and the procurement process, the Act makes a presumption towards disclosure of information wherever possible and to insight public confidence in the integrity and fairness of AWE.

Factors against disclosure of the information would be that freedom of information requests can be used as powerful tools for our adversaries to gain a better understanding of our external risk exposure. Disclosure could also harm the commercial interest of the suppliers by revealing sensitive information that competitors could exploit. Suppliers may also be less willing to engage with AWE in future contracts if they believe their identities and potentially sensitive information could be disclosed. This could have a major impact on the procurement process and disrupt operations and facilities which would in turn prevent the maintenance of Continuous at Sea Deterrent (CASD) and undermine the defence of the nation.

From a security perspective, releasing this information could also incite malicious activities beyond the control of the UK. Adversaries might use the information to impersonate AWE or its staff, leading to fraudulent or harmful actions.

While there is a public interest in promoting openness and transparency, these must be weighed against commercial interests. The outcome of the Public Interest Test (PIT) was that the information should be withheld to prevent prejudice to commercial interest.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications and please accept our apologies for the delay in responding to your request. 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