



Date
26 September 2024

Post Office
100 Wood Street
London EC2V 9ER

Your Ref: FOI2024/01113

Classification:
Public

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information Request – FOI2024/01243

We are writing in response to your email received by Post Office Limited (**"Post Office"**) on 05 September 2024, part of which has been dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (**"FOIA"**).

In your email you have requested the information shown verbatim in bold below:

"I hereby request sight of the Strategic Partner Framework Agreement you have in place with A.F. Blakemore. This request is made under the Freedom of Information Act.

The information requested is very much in the public interest given the poor quality of service being provided by A.F. Blakemore in the Post Office in [REDACTED]. Local residents have been complaining in large numbers over several months and want answers."

Please note, given the second paragraph of your email is not a request for recorded information, we have passed this on to the relevant business area External Affairs, who will respond separately to you.

We can confirm that Post Office does hold the information you have requested in the first part of your email.

However, the information you requested is being withheld as it falls under the exemption in section 43(2) of the FOIA, which relates to information which would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the

public authority holding it). In applying this exemption, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure.

We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning details of strategic partners, including any agreements in place, as this helps promote transparency in Post Office business and reassurance about the way public money is being spent.

However, there is a strong public interest in withholding the information as it would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial interests of Post Office. This is because disclosing the agreement in place could be used by competitors to gain an insight into the arrangements Post Office has with its partners, thus putting Post Office at a competitive disadvantage. For example, it would reveal the specifics of the agreement with A.F Blakemore which could affect ongoing or upcoming contract negotiations. It could impact operational agreements with new and existing strategic partners or those of A.F. Blakemore and could damage Post Office's ability to negotiate or establish new partnerships.

It would not be in the public interest to disclose information if Post Office would be unable to operate effectively in a fair, competitive marketplace, or if Post Office is commercially disadvantaged by the release of the information.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of this response, you do have a right to request an internal review. You can do this by writing to the address above within 40 working days of receipt of this response stating your reasons for your internal review request or alternatively, by emailing information.rights@postoffice.co.uk.

If, having requested an internal review by Post Office, you are still not satisfied with our response you also have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113
www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints

Yours sincerely,

Information Rights Team

information.rights@postoffice.co.uk

<https://corporate.postoffice.co.uk/en/governance/access-to-information/access-to-information/>

Post Office Limited is committed to protecting your privacy, information about how we do this can be found on our website at www.postoffice.co.uk/privacy