Business Services Organisation

Chief Executive
2 Franklin Street
BELFAST
BT2 8DQ

Tel: 028 9536 3863
Email: FOI.BSO@hscni.net

30th July 2024

BY EMAIL
[redacted]

Our Ref: FOI 2218

Dear [redacted]

Your request for information was received on 5th June 2024 and was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please be advised that the Business Services Organisation (BSO) has now completed its search for the information you requested in relation to the organisation's management of Corporate Estates and Maintenance.

Firstly, please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in providing you with a formal response.

Please find the response as follows:

How are facilities management services (hard FM, soft FM or TFM) handled across your estates?

These services are tendered

If any services are outsourced, which services and to which suppliers?

All services are handled by the FM contractor, H&Js

What are the start dates and durations of these contracts, including the end date, and which services are included in each?

Start date Feb 21
End date Oct 24

What are the values of the contracts?

We are unable to provide an exact value as it is wholly dependent on any works carried out and as such is variable.

Is there an extension clause in the contract(s) and if so, what is the duration of the extension?

Yes
9 months

Has a decision been made yet on whether the contract(s) are being either extended or renewed?

An extension is in place

What is the job title of the senior officer (outside of procurement) responsible for the contract(s)?

Estates Manager

Do you utilise any outsourced helpdesk or FM integrator services? If so, with which supplier(s)?

Yes - FM contractor (H&Js)

Which software solution(s) are used to manage your corporate property/assets including facilities management (CAFM)?

This information is considered exempt from disclosure under Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act 200('Law Enforcement'). Section 31 is a qualified exemption which means that the public interest test (PIT) must be considered. This involves weighing the harm resulting from possible disclosure against the likely benefit to the wider public. A copy of the PIT is attached for your reference.

In considering the PIT, I acknowledge that there may be a public interest for disclosure in line with BSO's requirement to be open and transparent in its use of public monies and provision of public services. However, while I make no suggestion that there is any malicious intent on your part; provision (and therefore publication) would be capable of making BSO, and the wider Health and Social Care, vulnerable to malicious attack. I therefore consider that the public interest in withholding this information outweighs the public interest in supplying it.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter, as the BSO, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to

Information Governance Manager,
2 Franklin Street,
Belfast,
BT2 8DQ

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision-making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the BSO has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act.

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

Website: www.ico.org.uk
Phone: 0303 123 1113
Email: casework@ico.org.uk
Post: Information Commissioner's Office
3rd Floor, 14 Cromac Place
Belfast
BT7 2JB

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However, the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

Karen Bailey
Chief Executive

Public Interest Test (PIT)

Exemption claimed in respect of Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ('Law Enforcement') for disclosure of details on contracts registers

In considering this PIT, the following have been taken into account:

- the public interest in issues of accountability and transparency and in scrutinising how BSO's affairs are conducted
- the public interest in ensuring that BSO is able to protect its systems from cyber-attacks which could damage security
- the public interest in ensuring that BSO can proactively manage the risks around cyber security, for the wellbeing and safety of all its stakeholders

In favour of disclosure of information	**In favour of not disclosing information**
Openness and transparency: it is recognised that releasing this information would provide the public with assurance that we are: • protecting our technologies; • spending public money responsibly, especially where this relates to the provision of public services	BSO hosts a vast range of software, systems and data on behalf of the wider Health and Social Care (HSC) within Northern Ireland. Release of this information would make BSO, and by association the wider HSC more vulnerable to crime (namely a malicious attack on BSO's network). As such release of this information would be seen to prejudice the prevention or detection of crime by making BSO more vulnerable to hacking at a given time.
	Under data protection legislation, BSO has a legal obligation to process personal data in a manner that ensures its appropriate security using appropriate technical or organisational measures. The release of this information is therefore a reasonable threat to the security and integrity of confidential personal data held on our systems.
	BSO and the wider HSC operate the majority of their services with a high dependency on IT. Many services operate almost exclusively via information held within our network infrastructure. Any disruption of BSO's network infrastructure, even for a short period would be likely to severely restrict our ability to carry out statutory functions across the wider HSC network.

	There is therefore an overwhelming public interest in keeping BSO's systems secure which would be served by non-disclosure. It has therefore been decided that the balance of the public interest lies clearly in favour of withholding the material on this occasion.