



UK Visas
& Immigration

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FOI Reference: 77509

18 August 2023

Dear Will Neal

Thank you for your enquiries of 19 July 2023, in which you requested information regarding the Bibby Stockholm initiative. Your enquiries have been handled as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Information Requested

** Total agreed-upon or forecasted amount granted to Dorset Council for the provision of any services directly related to plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm while the vessel is moored in Portland, Dorset.*

** A breakdown of these services by amount, whether agreed-upon or forecasted.*

** Total agreed-upon or forecasted amount, if any, to be granted to Dorset Police to support capacity of the force in policing any public disturbances or other issues that may arise as a direct or indirect result of plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm while the vessel is moored in Portland, Dorset.*

** Australian firm Corporate Travel Management was recently awarded a £1.6 billion UK government contract to manage an unknown number of hotels and vessels related to the provision of accommodation and other services to asylum seekers in the UK. Please let me know whether this included the provision of such*

services aboard the Bibby Stockholm while it is used to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers off the Dorset coast.

** Total agreed-upon or forecasted amount, if any, to be granted to Dorset NHS for the provision of healthcare or other services pertaining to plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm while the vessel is moored in Portland, Dorset.*

** The name of the entity, whether public or private, that will provide security services aboard the Bibby Stockholm as part of plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers off the Dorset coast.*

** If the entity has not yet been determined, the specific date or rough time period in which the UK government expects a decision to be made.*

** Any agreed-upon or forecasted costs, in their totality, pertaining to the provision of security services aboard the Bibby Stockholm as part of these plans.*

** What, if any, provisions have been made for the extension of current plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm vessel beyond the initial 18-month period.*

** Towing costs pertaining to moving the Bibby Stockholm from Genoa in Italy to Falmouth in the UK, as part of plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm.*

** Towing costs pertaining to moving the Bibby Stockholm from Falmouth, Cornwall, to Portland, Dorset, as part of the same plans.*

** The costs of chartering, berthing and utilities, as separate amounts, related to plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm while it is moored off the Dorset coast.*

** The costs of inspection, repair and refurbishment, as separate amounts, related to increasing the capacity of the Bibby Stockholm vessel to the level required to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers off the Dorset coast.*

** The name of the company contracted by the UK government to provide these services while the boat was docked at Falmouth.*

Response

**** The costs of inspection, repair and refurbishment, as separate amounts, related to increasing the capacity of the Bibby Stockholm vessel to the level required to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers off the Dorset coast.***

**** The name of the company contracted by the UK government to provide these services while the boat was docked at Falmouth.***

The Home Office has contracted with Corporate Travel Management North (Ltd) for the provision of Vessel Accommodation Services. Any refurbishment works conducted on the Bibby Stockholm barge have been agreed between CTM and Bibby independently to ensure the Bibby Stockholm is suitable for the Home Office's requirement. The Home Office is not liable for the associated costs. Further details on the commercial arrangement in place from vessel accommodation solution located at Portland will be shared once the contract variation has been published onto Contract Finder.

*** Total agreed-upon or forecasted amount granted to Dorset Council for the provision of any services directly related to plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm while the vessel is moored in Portland, Dorset.**

*** A breakdown of these services by amount, whether agreed-upon or forecasted.**

The Home Office is providing funding to the NHS for a primary health service on the vessel to reduce the impact on local NHS services. NHS Dorset is receiving £1,963 per bedspace, paid pro-rata, for financial year 2023/24, to deliver healthcare by a local provider. Funding for financial year 2024/25 is to be agreed in due course. The Home Office is providing funding to Dorset Council (£3,500 per occupied bed space), to the local NHS and Police to reduce the impact on the local community and local services. A one-off payment of almost £380,000 was made to Dorset Council for voluntary sector support.

The medical facility on the vessel will be staffed 5 days a week providing a primary health service which the asylum seekers will register, this means individuals will not need to register with a local GP practice. The medical team, who are from Bournemouth, has previous experience of working with asylum seekers. This team will provide care to the asylum seekers either on the vessel itself between the hours of 9am- 5pm, or remotely (including outside of these hours).

Those living onboard Bibby Stockholm experiencing oral pain can first seek assistance with the onsite health care provider. Any dental assessment or treatment required will be done through local dental surgeries as there is no dentist on board.

*** Total agreed-upon or forecasted amount, if any, to be granted to Dorset Police to support capacity of the force in policing any public disturbances or other issues that may arise as a direct or indirect result of plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm while the vessel is moored in Portland, Dorset.**

Home Office has worked closely with Dorset Police, Portland Port, and the service provider responsible for the accommodation facility to develop plans and responses for the safety and security of the asylum seekers and the wider community.

The funding for community policing is £520,000, plus mutual aid, for 12 months, which was offered under the terms of the new police funding policy established for large sites and vessels. Further information can be found at the link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/large-sites-for-asylum-accommodation-support-for-police-forces/large-sites-for-asylum-accommodation-support-for-police-forces>

- * Australian firm Corporate Travel Management was recently awarded a £1.6 billion UK government contract to manage an unknown number of hotels and vessels related to the provision of accommodation and other services to asylum seekers in the UK. Please let me know whether this included the provision of such services aboard the Bibby Stockholm while it is used to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers off the Dorset coast.**
- * The name of the entity, whether public or private, that will provide security services aboard the Bibby Stockholm as part of plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers off the Dorset coast.**
- * Any agreed-upon or forecasted costs, in their totality, pertaining to the provision of security services aboard the Bibby Stockholm as part of these plans.**
- * What, if any, provisions have been made for the extension of current plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm vessel beyond the initial 18-month period.**
- * Towing costs pertaining to moving the Bibby Stockholm from Genoa in Italy to Falmouth in the UK, as part of plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm.**
- * Towing costs pertaining to moving the Bibby Stockholm from Falmouth, Cornwall, to Portland, Dorset, as part of the same plans.**
- * The costs of chartering, berthing and utilities, as separate amounts, related to plans to house approximately 500 single male asylum seekers aboard the Bibby Stockholm while it is moored off the Dorset coast.**

In relation to the above questions, further details on the commercial arrangement in place for the vessel accommodation located at Portland will be shared once the contract variation has been published onto Contract Finder.

Therefore, after careful consideration we have decided that the information is exempt from disclosure under section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act. This provides that information can be withheld if it is intended for future publication. Section 22 of the Act is a qualified exemption and requires consideration of the public interest test. Arguments for and against disclosure in terms of the public interest with the reasons for our conclusion, are set out in the attached Annex A below.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you may request an independent internal review of our handling of your request by submitting a complaint within two months to foirequests@homeoffice.gov.uk, quoting reference **77509**. If you ask for an internal review, it would be helpful if you could say why you are dissatisfied with the response.

As part of any internal review the Department's handling of your information request would be reassessed by staff who were not involved in providing you with this

response. If you were to remain dissatisfied after an internal review, you would have a right of complaint to the Information Commissioner as established by section 50 of the FOI Act.

Yours sincerely

A. Chapple
Customer Services

We value your feedback, please use the link below to access a brief anonymous survey to help us improve our service to you:

<http://www.homeofficesurveys.homeoffice.gov.uk/s/108105TAZNG>

Annex - Public interest test in relation to Section 22

Some of the exemptions in the FOI Act, which we refer to as ‘qualified exemptions,’ are subject to a public interest test (PIT). This test is used to balance the public interest in disclosure against the public interest in maintaining the exemption. We must carry out a PIT where we are considering using any of the qualified exemptions in response to a request for information.

The ‘public interest’ is not necessarily the same as what is of interest to the public. When carrying out a PIT, we consider the greater good, or benefit, to society if the information is released, or if it is not.

Transparency and the ‘right to know’ must be balanced against the need to enable effective government and to serve the best interests of the public.

The FOI Act is ‘applicant blind.’ This means that we cannot, and do not, ask about the motives of anyone who asks for information. In providing a response to one person, we are expressing a willingness to provide the same response to anyone.

Considerations in favour of disclosing the information

There is a public interest in the disclosure of information – and it is in the public’s interest that government departments operate with transparency and accountability. There is also a public interest in providing information that enables the public to understand the rationale behind decisions which may affect them. Due to the globally high-profile nature of the subject, there is a specific public interest in enabling access to information about those being resettled in the UK that we provide with temporary accommodation for.

We acknowledge that disclosing this information now may be in the public’s interest - and that this may weigh in favour of it being unreasonable to wait for the information to be published.

Considerations in favour of maintaining the exemption

It is in the public’s interest that the publication of official information is a carefully planned and managed process. The Home Office must ensure that all information intended for publication meets the standards and requirements set for departmental publications. It would not be in the public interest for the Home Office to release this information before it meets these standards.

Releasing statistics before the planned publication date, e.g., in response to individual requests for information made under the Freedom of Information Act, would undermine the Home Office pre-planned publication procedures and its ability to use staff resources in a way that promotes the delivery of a publication within reasonable timetables.

Conclusion

We conclude that the balance of the public interest lies in maintaining the s.22 exemption and withholding the information, because it is in the overall public interest that the Home Office can plan its publication of information in a managed and cost-effective way.