

13 February 2026

Dear

Request for Information - ATISN 26617

Thank you for your request for information which I received on 26 January. Your request has been logged under reference ATISN 26617. You have asked for the following information relating to the long-term support package for Cardiff Airport:

1. The business case provided by the company in relation to the award.
2. The government's subsidy control principles assessment in relation to the grant.
3. The contract between the government and the company in relation to the subsidy.

Our Response

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides a right for anyone to ask a public authority to make requested information available to the wider public. As the release of requested information is to the world, not just the requester, public authorities need to consider the effects of making the information freely available to everybody. Any personal interest the requester has for accessing the information cannot override those wider considerations.

With regards to your request, we do hold the relevant information. However, we have decided to withhold that information and have set out in **Annex A** the relevant exemptions under FOIA that we believe are applicable, as well as our consideration of the public interest test.

Next steps

If you are dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's handling of your request, you can ask for an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this response.

Requests for an internal review should be addressed to the Welsh Government's Freedom of Information Officer at:

Information Rights Unit,
Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff,
CF10 3NQ
or Email: Freedomofinformation@gov.wales

Please remember to quote the ATISN reference number above.

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,

Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

However, please note that the Commissioner will not normally investigate a complaint until it has been through our own internal review process.

The request you sent me contains personal information about you - for example, your name and email address. The Welsh Government will be the data processor for this information and, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, it will be processed in order to fulfil our public task and meet our legal obligations under the Act to provide you with a response. We will only use this personal information to deal with your request and any matters which arise as a result of it. We will keep your personal information and all other information relating to your request for three years from the date on which your request is finally closed. Your personal information will then be disposed of securely.

Under data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed of the personal data we hold about you and to access it
- to require us to rectify inaccuracies in that data
- to (in certain circumstances) object to or restrict processing
- for (in certain circumstances) your data to be 'erased'
- to (in certain circumstances) data portability
- to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who is our independent regulator for data protection

For further information about the information which the Welsh Government holds and its use, or if you wish to exercise your rights under the GDPR, please see contact details below:

Data Protection Officer
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF10 3NQ

Email: DataProtectionOfficer@gov.wales

The contact details for the Information Commissioner's Office are:

Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Website: www.ico.org.uk

Any information released under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or Environmental Information Regulations 2004 will be listed in the Welsh Government's Disclosure Log (at <https://gov.wales/about/open-government/freedom-of-information/responses/?lang=en>).

Yours sincerely

Annex A

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We have decided to withhold information in line with exemption Section 43(2) – Commercial interests under the FOIA.

This annex sets out the reasons for the engagement of these sections of the FOIA and our subsequent consideration of the Public Interest test.

Section 43(2) – commercial interests

Section 43(2) covers any information that, if disclosed, would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

The information requested contains financial and commercial information (including financial workings and supporting analysis) which, should it be disclosed, would be likely to prejudice Cardiff Airport and companies engaged in commercial discussions with Cardiff Airport. The information would reveal commercially sensitive information not otherwise publicly available which, if disclosed would be likely to prejudice the companies' service offerings, future commercial strategies and commercial negotiations.

Neither Cardiff Airport, nor the companies engaged with Cardiff Airport, have access to similar information on its competitors as they do not publish it. Disclosure would give any competitors a distinct commercial advantage and stepping stone which would be likely to put the companies' own business at risk and therefore prejudice their ability to engage in future commercial activities.

Public interest arguments in favour of release

We understand that the decisions of Welsh Ministers with regards to Cardiff Airport are of interest to the general public. It is important that public service activities carried out are appropriately transparent to provide assurance to citizens. We are also aware of additional interest in the matter following the Welsh Government's referral to the Competition and Markets Authority's Subsidy Advice Unit and Bristol Airport's Notice of Appeal as filed with the Competition and Appeal Tribunal brought under section 70(1) of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 (SCA) in relation to our proposed subsidy to Cardiff International Airport Limited.

Public interest arguments in favour of withholding

Section 43(2) is intended to ensure that, in appropriate cases, information is not disclosed that would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).

As I have explained above, to disclose the information to the public would give any competitors a distinct commercial advantage and stepping stone which would be likely to put Cardiff Airport's business, and the companies engaged with Cardiff Airport, at risk and therefore

prejudice the companies' ability to engage in future commercial activities. We believe the resultant harm should this information be released, would be substantial.

I do not believe that facilitating this type of unfair competitive advantage would be in the wider public interest. I further do not believe there is a public interest in prejudicing the commercial interests of Cardiff Airport, or the companies engaged with Cardiff Airport, by the release of this information.

I am aware that, as a general rule, the sensitivity of some information may be likely to reduce over time; therefore the age of the information, or timing of the request, may be relevant in determining whether to apply an exemption, or where the public interest may lie. In this case, however, the information captured is very much current information. I believe therefore that the balance of the public interest falls in favour of withholding the information.

Conclusion

We believe that it is within the wider public and commercial interest of the Welsh Government, Cardiff Airport and companies engaged with Cardiff Airport to withhold the information related to this request, in order to prevent putting Cardiff Airport and associated businesses at an unfair competitive disadvantage.

The Welsh Government endeavours to ensure it is as transparent as possible, in particular through the media, publication of documents, Ministerial Written Statements and public statements in the Senedd. We take the view that, on balance, this public interest has been satisfied and the information requested has been withheld under Section 43(2) of the Act for the reasons set out above.