

HOUSE OF LORDS

APPOINTMENTS COMMISSION

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Ref: HOLAC FOI 2020/4

14 March 2022

By email: <REDACTED>

Dear <REDACTED>,

Freedom of Information Act

I am further replying to your Freedom of Information request, which the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC) received on 4 August 2020.

You asked:

1. Please send me full minutes and all other records held of business at Commission meetings since 29 October 2019 relating to

(a) discussion of Dissolution Peerages

(b) discussion of other Peerages

2. Please send me copies of all papers prepared for or considered at Commission meetings since 29 October 2019 relating to

(a) Dissolution Peerages

(b) other Peerages

3. Please send me copies of all communications since 29 October 2019 between Lord Bew and the HOLAC secretariat relating to

(a) Dissolution Peerages

(b) other Peerage

In my previous response to you of 14 August 2020, the information you requested was withheld under the following sections of the Freedom of Information Act:

- Section 22(1) - information intended for future publication;
- Section 37(1)(b) - information relating to the conferring by the Crown of any honour or dignity;

- Section 40(2) - personal information; and
- Section 41(1)(b) - information provided in confidence.

The decision to withhold this information was then upheld at the internal review stage in October 2020 (reference number IR2020/1). We are aware that you have since written to the Information Commissioner's Office to appeal against this decision (ICO reference IC-70244 B9S9).

Since this request was made, and as a result of ICO complaint IC-70244 B9S9, we have reassessed the information in scope of your request. On reassessing this information we have concluded that each of the exemptions used in our original response remain valid and should be upheld.

In addition to these exemptions however, the House of Lords Appointments Commission has judged that some of the information in scope is exempt under section 23(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 23(1) relates to information supplied by, or relating to, bodies dealing with security matters. Section 23 is an absolute exemption and therefore we are not obliged to consider the public interest in disclosure.

Some of the information in scope is also exempt under section Section 24(1) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 24(1) relates to safeguarding national security. Section 24(1) is a qualified exemption and is subject to public interest testing which means the information requested can only be withheld if the public interest in doing so outweighs the public interest in disclosure. The outcome of the public interest test in this case concluded that there remains significant public interest in maintaining the effectiveness and integrity of the vetting process and how information is obtained through specified searches and sources.

The House of Lords Appointments Commission has also supplied this information regarding these additional exemptions to the Information Commissioner's Office as part of their review of this case.

Yours sincerely,

Secretariat to the House of Lords Appointments Commission