



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

23 June 2009

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST: 0271-09

I refer to your request dated 29 March 2009 under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("the Act") for the following:

"I would like to request information about the "Bringing Foreign Policy Back Home" initiative that is to be initiated by the Foreign Office and which was announced in the recently published CONTEST strategy.

Please release the following information:

- 1. What are the aims, goals and remit of this programme?*
- 2. Who will run it (the foreign office or a third-party?)*
- 3. When will it be launched?*
- 4. How long will the scheme run for?*
- 5. How much will it cost (anticipated budget)?*
- 6. When did the idea for this project first emerge (please provide the date on which it was first discussed or suggested)? Which department (within the Foreign Office or beyond) suggested it?*
- 7. What is the intended mode of operation for this programme e.g. will it be lecture based, workshop based?*
- 8. Who is the intended target audience?*
- 9. What discussions have been had (and by whom - including individuals and departments) about the increasing role being played in domestic politics by the Foreign Office under Prevent (and/or Contest more generally)?*
- 10. Please release all official meeting minutes in relation to this programme."*

I am writing to confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant within the description specified in your request.

We have provided answers to questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (in part), 6, 7, 8, and 9. Regarding questions 5 and 10, where we do not hold the information centrally, it would greatly exceed the appropriate limit of £600 set by Government FOI regulations to ascertain this. According to the regulations, £600 represents the estimated cost of one person spending 3½ working days in determining whether the Department holds the information, and locating, retrieving and extracting the information. Under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act the Department is not obliged to comply with your request and, given the cost, we are not able to answer points 5 and 10 of your request.

If you were to make a new request for a narrower category of information regarding these questions, we may be able to comply within the appropriate limit, although I cannot guarantee that this will be the case. You may, for example, wish to specify what type of costs

you are interested in. For example, you may wish to narrow your request to a particular area of work (e.g. climate change) or geographic area of focus within the UK.

Any reformulated request the Department receives from you will be treated as a fresh Freedom of Information request.

In addition, we have concluded that some of the information that the FCO holds in relation to your request should not be disclosed under Sections 21 (information accessible to the applicant by other means) and section 35 (formulation of government policy) of the Freedom of Information Act.

The FCO can confirm that it holds additional information that is already in the public domain. This information has been withheld under section 21 and can be accessed at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/newsroom/latest-news/?view=Speech&id=10597849> . The FOI regime does not provide an alternative means of access to information which is already freely available either through commercial publishing operations or through existing publicly funded provision. The FOI Act rights are designed to supplement, and not to duplicate, the ordinary circulation of information to the public through the commercial electronic and print media and through existing library and archive services. We have therefore not included this information. Section 21 is an absolute exemption and not covered by the public interest test.

Some of the information relevant to your request has been exempted under section 35 (formulation and development of Government policy). This is a qualified exemption and as such subject to a public interest test.

The FCO considers that there is a general public interest in greater transparency in the decision-making process in order to ensure that the government is accountable to the public, particularly in relation to the matters covered by your request. However, with regards to section 35 (1) (a), for the effective formulation of government policy, the Government requires a clear space, immune from public view in which it can debate matters internally free from the pressures of public political debate. It is vital that Ministers and civil servants have the ability to properly consider and discuss policy options, to ensure the best possible response is achieved. The candour of contributions to this process will be affected by officials' assessment of whether the content of such a discussion will be disclosed in the near future. This would have a negative impact on the quality of decision making, which is clearly not in the public interest and therefore the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

A copy of the information relating to your questions is enclosed in the format you requested.

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including any non commercial research you are doing and for the purposes of news reporting. Any other reuse, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder. Most documents supplied by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will have been produced by government officials and will be Crown Copyright. You can find details on the arrangements for re-using Crown Copyright on HMS Online at:

<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/copyright/licences/click-use-home.htm>

Information you receive which is not subject to Crown Copyright continues to be protected by the copyright of the person, or organisation, from which the information originated. You must ensure that you gain their permission before reproducing any third party (non Crown Copyright) information.

1. What are the aims, goals and remit of this programme?

The initiative we understand you to be referring to is the 'Bringing Foreign Policy Home' project, which is mentioned in the CONTEST 2 strategy, in the context of the PREVENT strand. The purpose of the Prevent strategy is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.

The 'Bringing Foreign Policy Home' initiative aims to explain the interdependence between foreign and domestic policy while further engaging UK citizens in the work of the FCO as we support UK businesses and citizens abroad. It includes all sections of the UK population and is not singularly on Muslim communities.

2. Who will run it (the foreign office or a third-party?)

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

3. When will it be launched?

The 'Bringing Foreign Policy Home' initiative was launched by the Foreign Secretary in Cardiff on 17 October 2008. A copy of his speech to the Cardiff Business Club is attached:



UNC_2008-12-08_FS
Speech to CBC 17 Oc

4. How long will the scheme run for?

The initiative is scheduled to run for the next 12 months (until April 2010).

5. How much will it cost (anticipated budget)?

This campaign is undertaken with partners, such as community groups, universities and businesses, and the costs are therefore minimal. They are mostly train fares, occasional accommodation and security measures.

As explained in the covering letter, we do not hold this information centrally so it would exceed the appropriate limit to fully answer this question.

6. When did the idea for this project first emerge (please provide the date on which it was first discussed or suggested)? Which department (within the Foreign Office or beyond) suggested it?

The idea for the initiative first emerged during the Foreign Secretary's speech at the FCO's 2008 Leadership Conference, in London, on 4 March 2008. Please see the attached summary of the Foreign Secretary's speech, specifically paragraph 6:

Our powers of influence and persuasion need to be deployed not just abroad, not just within government, but also more widely in the UK. To make foreign policy work we have to carry our citizens with us. The FS urged diplomats to 'bring foreign policy back home'.



UNC

2009-04-20_LW08 FS

7. What is the intended mode of operation for this programme e.g. will it be lecture based, workshop based?

The programme uses a mixture of methods to engage with the public and is open to new ideas. These include Question and Answer sessions with students and community groups, roundtable discussions, seminars and media interviews.

8. Who is the intended target audience?

The UK public, particularly businesses, young people, faith groups, academics, students and diaspora communities.

9. What discussions have been had (and by whom - including individuals and departments) about the increasing role being played in domestic politics by the Foreign Office under Prevent (and/or Contest more generally)?

Please see the attached document which contains relevant information held by the FCO's Counter Terrorism Department:



Digest for FoI
0271-09.doc

10. Please release all official meeting minutes in relation to this programme.

As explained in the covering letter, to answer this point of your request would exceed the cost limit and therefore Section 12 of the Act applies.