

Mappin House  
4, Winsley Street  
London  
W1W 8HF

28 April 2016

Dear

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST – OUR REF FOI0004**

Thank you for your follow up request for information about the PRP's meeting with Tim Luckhurst that took place on 9 November 2015. Your request was received on 9 April 2016 and it has been dealt with under the terms of the PRP's Freedom of Information (FOI) policy.

In responding to your letter, I have taken each question in turn:

- 1. Was it ever agreed in advance that the meeting at the University of Kent would be confidential. Assuming that it was confidential at Professor Luckhurst's request, on what basis did the PRP accept Professor Luckhurst's requests for confidentiality?*

I can confirm that it was not agreed in advance of the meeting taking place that it would be confidential in nature. It might be worth re-iterating the background to the meeting: David Wolfe wrote to Professor Luckhurst on 16 October 2015 after reading Professor Luckhurst's foreword to the recently published report [Leveson's Illiberal Legacy](#). David asked for the opportunity to meet with to discuss the foreword, as part of the PRP's keenness to engage with the wide range of people who have an interest in press regulation. Professor Luckhurst responded by stating that he would be delighted to explain his position, and inviting David to give a talk to journalism students of the University of Kent's Centre for Journalism. You can read the exchanges of correspondence on our website, [here](#).

David Wolfe explained at the start of the meeting that a note would be taken, with a view to a note of the discussion being published once agreed by both parties. Professor Luckhurst subsequently requested that his responses be kept confidential.

We set out our reasons for respecting Professor Luckhurst's request for confidentiality in our letter of 25 February 2016 i.e. we want individuals and organisations (including the full range of stakeholders with and interest in our work, as well as individuals such as whistleblowers) to feel able to speak to us on a confidential basis. We want to encourage people to share information, insights and intelligence with us. Wherever possible our aim is to publish an agreed note of such meetings, but where a party disagrees with publication (of part of the note) we respect that wish, principally in order not to jeopardise the future of such meetings. We have respected other requests for parts of meeting notes to be withheld.

2. *Did you tell Professor Luckhurst before or at the time of the meeting that the meeting would be reported in line with your policy?*

David Wolfe explained at the start of the meeting with Professor Luckhurst that notes were being taken, which would be written up and – subject to both parties' agreement – subsequently published.

3. *You say in your response of 25 February that “the public interest favours withholding the information in this instance” because, citing the example of whistle blowers, you want people to “feel able to speak to us on a confidential basis”. The public interest test is thus discretionary in order to protect specific circumstances, such as those of whistle blowers. Was Professor Luckhurst ever considered to be, or did he ever claim to be, a whistle blower? What reasons did Professor Luckhurst give for requiring secrecy if he was not claiming to be a whistle blower?*

I can confirm that Professor Luckhurst did not claim to be a whistle blower; in respect of the second part of your question, the simple reason why the information is being withheld is that Professor Luckhurst did not agree to his responses being made public.

4. *Do you require stakeholders with whom the PRP engages to give objectively reasonable grounds for justifying secrecy in relation to their representations, and, if so, do you require that they demonstrate a public interest justification?*

I would refer you to my earlier answer above i.e. wherever possible our aim is to publish an agreed note of such meetings, but where a party requests that parts of the note should be confidential, we respect that wish, without the need to give objective reasons, principally in order not to jeopardise the future of such meetings. We have respected other requests for parts of meeting notes to be withheld – the approach taken with Professor Luckhurst mirrors that taken with regard to the notes of other stakeholder meetings.

5. *On what basis does this apparent policy (of allowing stakeholders to veto the disclosure of their representations) not also apply to emails or letters which make the very same points as verbal communications?*

The issue has not yet arisen in the context of written correspondence (i.e. emails or letters). Our policy is to disclose all relevant correspondence publicly, and we would consider any requests for redaction on their merit, and taking public interest aspects into account.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you should refer to the complaints procedure as set out in our FOI policy, which is available on our website [here](#). As the PRP is not subject to the Act, I should remind you that there is no right of complaint to the Information Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

Holly Perry  
**Head of Governance**  
**Press Recognition Panel**