

Susan Crompton  
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Date: 5 June 2026

Our reference: 19579973

Dear 

### **Environmental Information Regulations 2004**

This request is being handled under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

I can confirm that Sefton Council holds the information you requested. However we are withholding that information since we consider that the following exceptions apply to it.

In considering this FOI request the Council has used the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) exception 12 (5) (e) concerning the confidentiality of commercial information. Our response as follows:

- Refusal of Disclosure: The Council has determined that the requested ecology reports are exempt from disclosure at this time under Regulation 12(5)(e) of the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), which relates to the confidentiality of commercial information.
- Basis for Exception: The site in question is allocated for housing, and these reports were commissioned specifically to inform the Council's valuation and commercial negotiations for the land's disposal. The reports form a critical part of the "valuation chain." Disclosing this information into the public domain at this pre-market stage would provide a prospective purchaser with an unfair insight into the Council's internal assessment of the site's constraints. This would allow bidders to pre-emptively adjust offers or artificially drive down the disposal price, directly undermining the Council's ability to achieve "Best Value" for the public purse.
- The Public Interest Test: In applying this exception, the Council has considered the public interest. While we acknowledge the general interest in transparency regarding land allocated for housing, we have determined that in this instance, the public interest is best served by protecting the Council's commercial negotiating position. Maintaining the confidentiality of these reports ensures a competitive bidding process and protects the financial interests of the local taxpayer.

This response therefore acts as a refusal notice under regulation 14 of the Environmental Information Regulations.

Please quote the reference number 19579973 in any future communications about this request.

**Regulations 11(1) and 11(2) of the Environmental Information Regulation Act** states that public authorities must provide applicants with details of how they may complain about the handling of their request for information should they wish to. If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been

dealt with then you can request an internal review within 40 days of receiving our response. This should be directed to the Information Management and Governance Lead via email at [info.information@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:info.information@sefton.gov.uk).

Should you choose to request a review of the decision taken and are dissatisfied following the authority's review, you can contact the Information Commissioner for a decision notice.

Further information can be found at:

**Information Commissioner's Office**

**Wycliffe House**

**Water Lane**

**Wilmslow**

**Cheshire**

**SK9 5AF**

**Telephone: 0303 123 1113**

**Website: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)**

I will now close your request as of this date.

Yours faithfully

Susan Crompton  
Team Leader - Property Services

[www.sefton.gov.uk](http://www.sefton.gov.uk)