ANNEX A

FOI DOF/2026-0228

Request

I would like your department to provide the minutes of the following ministerial meeting which took place from October 2025 to the end of December 2025.

If there were briefings given to the Minister prior to or after the meeting, I would also like to see those.

1. Hilary Benn
2. Belfast Commercial Funding CEO etc
3. Chief Executive to the Treasury James Murray et al.
4. Autumn banking roundtable

DoF response

I can confirm the department holds the information requested. However, some of the information has been withheld as it falls within exemptions. Further details are provided below.

1. Hilary Benn
Please note some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Having considered all of the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test - Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test (attached as a separate document – **Annex D**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject and where it relates to the names and contact details of junior staff who could be identified.

2. Commercial Funding CEO etc
Please note some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Having considered all of the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test - Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test (attached as a separate document – **Annex D**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject and where it relates to the names and contact details of junior staff who could be identified.

Furthermore, please note some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 43(2) exempts information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any legal person (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity). Section 43 is a qualified exemption that is subject to a Public Interest Test (PIT) (please see – **Annex C** attached).

3. Chief Executive to the Treasury James Murray et al

Please note some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Having considered all of the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test - Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test (attached as a separate document – **Annex D**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject and where it relates to the names and contact details of junior staff who could be identified.

4. Autumn banking roundtable

Please note some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act. Section 40(2) exempts personal information from disclosure if that information relates to someone other than the applicant, and if disclosure of that information would contravene one of the data protection principles in schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018.

Having considered all of the information contained within the Legitimate Interest Test - Lawful, Fairness and Transparency Test (attached as a separate document – **Annex D**), the department has established that, on balance, there is no lawful basis for the disclosure of third party personal data falling within the scope of the request of which the requester is not the data subject and where it relates to the names and contact details of junior staff who could be identified.

Please note some of the information you have requested is exempt under section 36(2)(b)(ii) and 36(2)(c). Information to which this section applies is exempt information if, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure of the information under this Act if it (b) would, or would be likely to, inhibit— (ii) the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or (c) would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs. Section 36 is a qualified exemption that is subject to a Public Interest Test (PIT) (please see – **Annex E** attached).

Annex B - Internal Reviews

An Internal Review request challenges the response given, based on exemptions applied, the adequacy of the search, and the timeliness of the response. It is not the following which will be treated as specified:

- Questions asking for clarification on information provided: Will be treated as part of original FOI request.
- Additional questions about the information in the response: Will be treated as a new FOI request.
- Questions about the subject not related to the original request: Will be treated as new FOI request.
- Questions regarding how a service operates or why a decision was made: Will be treated as normal business and responded to accordingly.
- Complaints or concerns raised in response to information provided: Will be treated in line with relevant complaints procedure.

What to do

- **Submit a request**: Clearly state that you want an internal review of a previous FOI response and provide the necessary details.
- **Follow the timeline**: Be sure to submit your request within 40 working days of receiving the original response. If the Department has not responded at all, you have 40 working days after the original 20-day response period has passed.
- **Wait for a response**: The review is typically completed within 20 working days but can take up to 40 working days in exceptional circumstances. The Department should inform you of any delays.

What the review includes

- A fresh decision based on a reconsideration of all relevant factors.
- An assessment of whether the request was handled correctly and if exemptions were applied appropriately.
- The review will be conducted by someone who was not involved in the original decision.

If you wish to request an internal review, please email foi@finance-ni.gov.uk or write to FOI/EIR Team, Department of Finance, 2nd Floor, Craigantlet Buildings, Stoney Road, Belfast, BT4 3SX.