24 August 2016

Our reference Number: FOI/2016/282

Dear [Name],

I refer to your request dated 27 July 2016 made under the Freedom of Information Act 2014, which was received on 27 July 2016 for records held by the Department of Education and Skills. Your request sought:

“All records relating to the work of the inter-departmental steering group on student accommodation since its establishment (ca. September 2015,) under the chairmanship of Department of Education deputy secretary general.


Such records should include, but not be restricted to:
- agendas and minutes of steering group meetings
- agendas and minutes of meetings of the steering group, or its representatives/secretariat with other individuals or organisations
- correspondence between the steering group and individual Government departments or statutory agencies (including but not restricted to NAMA, Higher Education Authority)
- correspondence between the steering group and representative organisations of the higher education sector, and/or individual higher education institutions.
- correspondence between the steering group and other representative organisations (including, but not restricted to, Union of Students in Ireland, Construction Industry Federation)"

As we discussed by telephone on Wednesday 17 August 2016, your request is voluminous by nature and the search and retrieval of the volume of material involved in your request would materially and significantly disrupt the work of this Unit.
However, during the course of our conversation I did undertake to provide you with material from the date that the Minister signaled the formation of a Student Accommodation Working Group up until the date of your FOI Request (21/7/16) in relation to the meetings held by the inter-departmental steering group on student accommodation including details of:

- the membership of the group;
- minutes of the group;
- Agendas for Group meetings;
- Presentations given to the group;
- Details of the various Departments, Agencies and Bodies who have corresponded with the group (APPENDIX A);
- Answers to Parliamentary Questions;
- Latest Figures in relation to the number of Student Accommodation Projects in the Pipeline;
- Specific Information and correspondence with the Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness in relation to Student Accommodation;
- Specific Information and correspondence in relation to Student Accommodation contained in the Government’s new Action Plan on Housing - Rebuilding Ireland.

Accordingly, I Micheál Lenihan, Assistant Principal Officer have now made a final decision to grant the afore-mentioned request in relation to this material on 24 August 2016.

As I outlined to you on the telephone, Minutes for the meetings of the Working Group are signed off by the Group at the next meeting of the Group. Accordingly, the Minutes for the meeting of 04 May 2016 will be signed off by the Group at the next meeting of the Group which is scheduled for 13 September 2016. If you wish to get a copy of these Minutes please contact me after that date and I will forward them on to you.

I am also obliged to point out that this letter also contains:
1. a schedule of all of the records covered by your request;
2. a statement of how you can appeal this decision should you wish to do so.

1. Schedule of records
A schedule is enclosed with this letter, it shows the documents that the Department of Education and Skills considers relevant to your request.

2. Rights of appeal
You may appeal this decision. In the event that you need to make such an appeal, you can do so by writing to the Freedom of Information Unit, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1. Your correspondence should include a fee of €30 for processing the appeal. Payment should be made by way of personal cheque or postal money order made payable to the accountant in the Department of Education and Skills. Please note the Department of Education and Skills no longer accept cheque payments from business users. For further information regarding payment methods for business users, please email foi@education.gov.ie

You should make your appeal within 4 weeks from the date of this notification, where a day is defined as a working day excluding, the weekend and public holidays. However, the making
of a late appeal may be permitted in appropriate circumstances. The appeal will involve a complete reconsideration of the matter by a more senior member of the staff of this body.

3. Publication
All non-personal FOI requests will be recorded on an FOI disclosure log which will be published on the Department of Education and Skills website at http://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/FOI/FOI-Disclosure-Log/ in due course.

Should you wish to discuss the above further, please do not hesitate to contact me at (01) 8892314 or alternatively by e-mail at micheal_lenihan@education.gov.ie

Yours sincerely,

Micheal Lenihan
Assistant Principal Officer
Higher Education – Policy and Skills Division
Appendix A:
Details of the various Departments, Agencies and Bodies who have corresponded with the group

1. Department of Education and Skills
2. Higher Education Authority
3. Department of Finance
4. Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
5. Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (now known as Department of Housing, Planning, Community and Local Government)
6. Irish Universities Association (IUA)
7. Institutes of Technology Ireland (IOTI)
8. Union of Students' Ireland
9. UCD Students' Union
10. Dublin Institute of Technology
11. Trinity College Dublin
12. University College Dublin
13. University College Cork
14. Maynooth University
15. National University of Ireland Galway
16. University of Limerick
17. Dublin City University
18. IT Sligo
19. Letterkenny IT
20. Athlone Institute of Technology
21. Dundalk Institute of Technology
22. IT Tallaght
23. IT Blanchardstown
24. Dun Laoghaire IADT
25. IT Carlow
26. Waterford Institute of Technology
27. Limerick Institute of Technology
28. Cork Institute of Technology
29. IT Tralee
30. GMIT
31. NAMA
32. Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF)
33. National Economic and Social Council (NESC)
34. Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness