

From: <tomwatsonmp@ [REDACTED]>
To: <FOI.Team@[REDACTED]>
Date: Mon, 20 Dec 2010 15:06:28 +0000
Subject: Freedom of Information Request - Andy Coulson

CABINET OFFICE - ANDY COULSON

Dear Sir/Madam,

Under the Freedom of Information Act, please tell me:

- (a) On what date the Cabinet Office approved that Mr Andy Coulson could have the cost of his legal fees paid for by News International in relation to the trial of Mr Tommy Sheridan
- (b) Who within the Cabinet Office or Number Ten authorised the decision that Mr Andy Coulson could have the cost of his legal fees paid for by News International in relation to the trial of Mr Tommy Sheridan. Was it a committee that made this decision? Was it Sir Gus O'Donnell? Was it the Prime Minister? Please advise me of precisely who made this decision.
- (c) Please provide me with a copy of the minutes of the meeting in which it was agreed that Mr Andy Coulson could have the cost of his legal fees paid for by News International in relation to the trial of Mr Tommy Sheridan
- (d) Please provide me with all (a) written and (b) electronic submissions that were submitted to the Cabinet Office ahead of the decision being taken on whether or not the Cabinet Office should approve News International meeting the cost of Mr Andy Coulson's legal fees in connection with the trial of Mr Tommy Sheridan. This would include all submissions from solicitors, departmental officials, ministers, Mr Andy Coulson and News International.
- (e) Please provide me with all advice and guidance, both written and electronic, that has been provided to Mr Andy Coulson in relation to registering the payment of his legal fees by News International as a gift as part of the Cabinet Office's guidelines for reporting gifts and hospitality.
- (f) What internal and external legal advice the Cabinet Office sought ahead of its decision to approve News International's payment of Mr Andy Coulson's legal fees in relation to the trial of Mr Tommy Sheridan.
- (g) Please tell me what pre-meetings were held involving (a) ministers, (b) Cabinet Office officials and (c) Mr Andy Coulson ahead of the final decision being taken to allow News International to meet the cost of Mr Andy Coulson's legal fees in relation to the trial of Mr Tommy Sheridan.
- (h) A copy of the advice (a) requested or (b) submitted from/to the Cabinet Office from the Treasury Solicitors on this matter. This may be provided either electronically or in writing and would cover any emails sent and received.

(i) Please tell me how much News International is paying towards the cost of Mr Andy Coulson's legal fees in respect of the Tommy Sheridan trial. Given that the Cabinet Office has had to give its approval to this, the information should be readily available and should be made public.

I understand that under the Act, I should be entitled to a response within 20 working days of your receipt of this email.

Some parts of this request may be easier to answer than others. Should this prove to be the case, I would ask that you release available data as soon as possible - rather than hold up the entire request.

I would prefer to receive this information electronically. If the decision is made to withhold some of this data using exemptions within the Act, please inform me of that fact and cite the exemptions used.

If you need any clarification then please contact me at the number below or via email. Under your section 16 duty to provide advice and assistance I would expect you to contact me if you find this request unmanageable in any way.

I would be grateful if you could confirm that you have received this request, and I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

Tom Watson MP -- West Bromwich East

Tel: