Boundary Commission for England

████████████████

30 August 2017

2017/18 FOI 010

Dear ███████

Thank you for email to the Boundary Commission for England (BCE). As requested this has been treated as a request for information under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In your email you requested the following information:

1. An answer as to whether your organisation has a general policy on automatically deleting emails after a certain period of time. If so, what type of emails are deleted (e.g. calendar invites/sent items/inbox items/all items) and after what period of time?

2. I note that National Archives guidance states that organisations should "define clearly which emails need to be kept for business or historical value". Please provide your organisation's definition.

3. Details of your organisation's policy on routinely deleting dormant accounts/those of former staff (i.e. what type of emails are deleted and after what period of time?).

The BCE is a small advisory non-departmental body sponsored by the Cabinet Office. As such, in relation to records management we follow the Cabinet Office's general 'Managing Information' guide, made available to all staff via the Cabinet Office's intranet.

There is no general policy on automatic deletion of emails after a period of time. Staff are required to determine which of their emails are 'important' and transfer those from their individual email folders to corporate electronic shared file storage without delay. To assist staff to identify what emails are 'important', guidance provides the following definition:

- Information used to support and/or inform decision making.
- Submissions to senior managers and Commissioners, and their responses.
- Any financial information.
- Management and HR information and data about business performance.
- Terms of reference, memoranda of understanding.
- Commercial transactions, contracts, discussions with suppliers, bidders etc.
- Commission meeting papers, minutes, summaries or records of meetings, reports etc.
- Discussions or correspondence with external stakeholders, including consultations and consultation responses.
- Official correspondence, any Parliamentary business, FOI requests and responses.
- Project documentation.
- Internal memos and other records of business discussions with colleagues.

Decisions about which of those records should be retained in the long term are made by the BCE in consultation with the Departmental Records Officer.

The BCE's IT hardware, email accounts and electronic management systems are provided by our sponsor department the Cabinet Office. In relation to deletion of dormant individual email accounts, the Cabinet Office's 'Managing Information' guide specifies 'When you leave the Cabinet Office, your email account will be deleted.' For further information on the details of this process, we would therefore refer you direct to the Cabinet Office's FOI team at the following email address: foiteam@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.
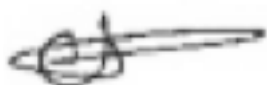
If you have any queries about the content of this reply please contact me direct, quoting the above reference number on any communication.

Under the provisions of the FOI Act if you are dissatisfied with the response provided you may wish to ask for an internal review. The BCE has a reciprocal arrangement with the Boundary Commission for Wales and in this instance you should write to:

The Secretary to the Boundary Commission for Wales
Ground Floor
Fitzalan Court
Cardiff
CF24 0BL
Email: bcomm.wales@wales.gsi.gov.uk

If it transpires you are not content with our response or the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided by the BCE. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

The Office of the Information Commissioner,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF

Mr Chris Wilcox
Information Manager