Internal Review Finds Department of Infrastructure Mishandled Mooir Vannin FOI Request

An estimated 25–30 boxes of Ørsted-related archived files found in Department storage

Raises questions about how Department manages records on the Island's largest ever infrastructure project

Almost nine months on, not one page has been released to the public

DOUGLAS, ISLE OF MAN – 12 November 2026. Campaign group NOT4IOM has criticised the Department of Infrastructure (DOI)'s handling of its Freedom of Information (FOI) request regarding the Agreement for Lease (AfL) that underpins Ørsted's proposed Mooir Vannin offshore wind farm.

The Request

The FOI request, submitted on 25 February 2026 by Georgina O'Sullivan on behalf of NOT4IOM, asked DOI to release select details from the 2015 Agreement for Lease. These include: the original terms and option period; variations, such as the extension of Ørsted's exclusive rights to the seabed to November 2030; the methodologies behind rental and royalty calculations; and records concerning the increase in Mooir Vannin's proposed capacity from approximately 700 MW to 1.4 GW including any best value reassessment, and the evolution of export and local supply obligations.

The request argued that the public has a right to understand what public assets, future liabilities and rights over the Manx territorial sea have been committed under the agreement.

From the outset, NOT4IOM made clear that commercially sensitive figures could be redacted. Instead, NOT4IOM wanted to understand the broad structure and terms of the AfL and variations.

DOI refuses request, says information is commercially sensitive or not held

The Department responded on 17 April, almost two months after receiving the request and having extended the standard 20-working-day deadline to around 33 working days.

It refused core parts of the FOI request on grounds of commercial sensitivity, citing risks to "trust", "market reputation" and "market speculation". No redacted version was offered.

For the rest of the request, the Department said it did not hold the information. An internal review has since found that the public authority does.

Internal review finds DOI did not carry out a reasonable search

An internal review of the Department's handling of the request, completed on 28 August 2026, found in NOT4IOM's favour.

The internal review found that:

- The information requested is held.
- New materials relating to Ørsted, including electronically held documentation and an estimated volume well above ten boxes of archived hardcopy material, were being held in storage and were previously unaccounted.
- A reasonable search was not conducted; two key divisions had not been asked to search for the requested information.
- No third-party consultation was carried out before applying the commercial sensitivity exemption.
- The Department did not give reasonable advice and assistance at every stage.

The review directed the Department to process the request again. This includes a new and thorough search across all locations, consultation across Government and with external parties, a fresh public interest test, and a staggered release of information.

Subsequent searches have since found 25–30 boxes of paper files held in storage, which have not been digitised. None of this material has yet been released.

Unsearched records and the MIMA examination

It is not known whether any of the archived material is relevant to the Marine Infrastructure Management Act (MIMA) examination of Mooir Vannin, which closed on 9 September.

The Department of Infrastructure, which signed the Agreement for Lease, made submissions to the examination. NOT4IOM is asking the Department to confirm whether any of the material in storage was considered when those submissions were prepared.

No timetable for release

On 7 September, NOT4IOM asked the Department for a named liaison officer, a timetable for and the staged release of information within 10 working days.

A dedicated Liaison Officer was appointed, and we acknowledge and appreciate their efforts, communications and commitment to delivering a fair process. However, no timetable has yet been given for the release of the requested information.

On 4 November, NOT4IOM was told that the matter has been passed back to the Department's FOI team, which must now process the request again.

No date for a response has been given, almost nine months after the FOI request was submitted.

Georgina O'Sullivan from the NOT4IOM Team, commented:

"The Department of Infrastructure's mishandling of what should have been a straight-forward FOI request raises serious questions about the Department's recordkeeping on major infrastructure projects.

For almost nine months we've been refused, delayed and told the information didn't exist, while 25–30 boxes sat in storage. Was any of it relevant to the MIMA examination? We don't know, and the Department hasn't said.

If there is nothing of concern in the Agreement for Lease, publishing non-confidential parts should be straightforward. Ministers are due to decide on Mooir Vannin, the biggest development in the Island's history, in the coming months. The public deserves to understand the AfL and deed of variation before COMIN's decision is made, not after.

The new Minister has the chance to draw a line under this. We're asking him to set a firm timetable and to release the 2015 agreement, with only genuinely sensitive figures redacted."

NOT4IOM is calling for:

- The new Minister for Infrastructure, Mr Jason Moorhouse MHK, to ensure the Department's reprocessing of the FOI request fully complies with the internal review's directions, and to publish a firm timetable for the release of the requested information. If no timetable is provided by 19 November, NOT4IOM will consider referring the matter to the Information Commissioner.
- The release of the 2015 Agreement for Lease and the 2017 deed of variation, with only genuinely sensitive figures redacted, before the Council of Ministers decides on Mooir Vannin.
- The Department to confirm whether any of the material found in storage was considered in its submissions to the MIMA examination.

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Relevant Materials

- FOI request (reference: 5333242) - https://services.gov.im/freedom-of-information/search.
- Internal review report (reference: R104309 from 28 August 2026) – see attachment.
- NOT4IOM submission to the Examining Body regarding FOI request's relevance to examination - https://mima.gov.im/media/bctlt1ta/no-offshore-turbines-4-isle-of-man-2.pdf.

Timeline

Date	What happened
25 Feb 2026	NOT4IOM submits FOI request to the Department of Infrastructure
25 Mar 2026	Original 20-working-day deadline lapses; the Department extends it to 20 April
17 Apr 2026	DOI responds and refuses the release of information in full on grounds of commercial sensitivity; other records said to be "not held"
22 Apr 2026	NOT4IOM requests an internal review
May–Jul 2026	Internal review delayed; NOT4IOM chases; a further extension follows
28 Aug 2026	Internal review completed; finds in NOT4IOM's favour and directs the DOI to reprocess the FOI request in full
7 Sep 2026	NOT4IOM asks for a contact officer, timetable and staggered release of information within 10 working days
25 Sep 2026	Department reports it has found an estimated 25–30 boxes of Ørsted-related papers in storage, including ministerial correspondence
4 Nov 2026	Almost nine months on: DOI has released zero documents and has not provided a timetable for the release of the requested information

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